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GREAT COMPANIONS

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BY

EDITH WYATT

"An agreeable companion on a journey is as good as a carriage."

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TO

F. W.

NOTE

In reading the books of writers of genius one learns something of their knowledge in two ways: directly, by the words of the authors; and indirectly, by their whole manner of regarding creation.

This volume is a record of the pleasure one reader has found in the company of many books expressing truth in these two ways. Unlike in almost all other respects, their authors are alike in this characteristic. Each bears striking witness to his own knowledge: and writes of what he has seen and imagined of human life from his own peculiar outlook, that special place of his in the mystery of the universe, where no one has ever stood before, nor will stand again.

These essays will have served their purpose if they speed the guest in his acquaintance with the individualities of their comment—whether to old or to new friendships in letters.

E. F. W.

Chicago, 1917

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GREAT COMPANIONS

GREAT COMPANIONS

After the Great Companions! and to belong to them!
They too are on the road! . . . . .
Enjoyers of calms of seas, and storms of seas,
Sailors of many a ship, walkers of many a mile of land.

WALT WHITMAN

GREAT COMPANIONS

THE AUTHOR OF ROBINSON CRUSOE

If one were asked to name offhand, the story-book hero most widely known among English-speaking people, one would undoubtedly choose at a guess the vivid figure of *Robinson Crusoe.*

His fame scarcely differs from that of a celebrity not fictional at all, but historical. Many persons who have never glanced at the book describing his adventures understand quite as concretely and definitely as they understand that George Washington spent a winter at Valley Forge, that *Robinson Crusoe* owned a gun, a parrot and a dog; that he was cast upon a desert island; and that he found there a strange footprint in the sand.

Who conceived an image of such enduring charm? Who created *Crusoe?*

For long I had vaguely supposed that the life of Daniel De Foe, the author of our most

celebrated, fictive hero, was a subject like that of the Wars of the Roses, or the shipping insurance news in small print on the back page of the newspapers—one of those very well-known and complicated topics which always appear to one to be made simply for other people to know about.

When an accidental circumstance, I shall describe presently, inspired me to face the chilling fog of special information I feared, and to hunt up De Foe's name in the library, it was a surprise to find that the tale of De Foe's life, after all, apparently required no wide, allied historical reading for its comprehension, but had been, it would seem, composed by fate for the understanding of any layman.[1]

I

De Foe was the son of a family of Dissenters; his father, a butcher at Cripplegate in London.

[1] Mr. Walter Wilson's thick, old-fashioned biography, Mr. George Saintsbury's monograph, and his various delightful prefaces for Aitken's edition of the novels of De Foe, a sketch of Mrs. Oliphant's, the pages of Greene's "Puritan England," the appreciations by Sir Walter Scott, and Charles Lamb, and De Foe's own personal references in various pamphlets of his are the chief sources of the account gathered here.

Daniel was a little child of about four when the city was overwhelmed with the horror of the Great Plague of 1665, and the pestilence, pouring through London one of the most Titan catastrophes of history, was killing people in the streets, literally by myriads—ten thousand in a week, four thousand in one terrific night.

It was under these circumstances that the De Foes left London, in the reign of Charles II, at the very time when Pepys was being importuned by his wife to buy her a pearl necklace, and when he says of the government of the Merry Monarch: "At court, there being so much emulation, and the vices of drinking—and loose amours that I know not what will be the end of it but confusion; and the clergy so high that all people I meet do protest against their practice."

The bigotry and partisanship of these Episcopal and Tory churchmen of the ruling powers against the Dissenters was becoming so extreme, that only a few years later it was not safe for a Dissenting, or, as we should say, a Presbyterian minister to be seen in the streets of London, and their religious meetings were held at night, like conspiracies. While De Foe was still

a boy, the great Test Act was passed by the houses of Parliament. This excluded from all civil offices, that is to say, from all governmental honors, and all positions of any considerable standing or power, those who would not become communicants of the Church of England. So that, in sending De Foe to be educated at a Dissenting Academy, his family destined him to a career of social adventure.

Apparently, from Mr. Morton's Dissenting Academy the boy entered into trade, at eighteen, as a commission agent for a hosiery house in Cornhill. He seems to have published at about this time a rather dull pamphlet on the gowns of the clergy.[1] From his range, volume, and genius, De Foe was to become the most brilliant and influential pamphleteer, England, or perhaps the world, has ever known. But of his one hundred and ninety productions in this kind, he wrote nothing of value until he was thirty-five or six years of age, and the seven pamphlets he composed before then may be left unnoticed.

In the meantime, when De Foe was about twenty-five, Charles II died, surrounded on his

[1] There is some, but very little, doubt as to whether this pamphlet may certainly be attributed to De Foe.

deathbed by all his unmarried wives and mistresses, and all his natural children but one, his eldest son, the Duke of Monmouth. A few days after the Roman Catholic James II came to the throne, the Protestant Monmouth landed at Lyme to support his right of succession, and here De Foe, in company with great numbers of other Nonconformists and Dissenting tradesmen from the clothier towns, hastened to his standard.

Monmouth's popularity rose. Garlands were hung on the doors where he passed. "At Taunton a troop of young girls presented him with a flag and a bible." His army received constant accessions. But it was too untried to withstand the great force of James' followers which faced it at Edgemoor.

De Foe and his companions were now to see King James' victory and the beheading of their own leader, followed by a bigoted persecution hard and senseless enough to outrage even the ruthless Marlborough who was forced to execute it.

Over a thousand Dissenters were scourged and imprisoned. Women were whipped from town to town. Eight hundred Nonconformists

were sold into slavery across the sea. Judge Jeffreys, passing through the country in the famous "bloody circuit," condemned and hanged three hundred and fifty Englishmen. Three of these men had been De Foe's classmates at Mr. Morton's Dissenting Academy. De Foe himself chanced to be released on the singular ground that he was not a resident of the west of England but had come there from London.

II

Through the miseries and persecutions of the six years' reign of James II, De Foe was chiefly occupied by his mercantile trade. He became an important figure in the market at Cornhill, and owner or part owner of the hosiery house.

At the time when Parliament voted the expulsion of James he had been married some time, though we know little of his marriage except that he had several children of whom he wrote afterwards that he loved them past his power to express.

At the time of the coronation of William and Mary he rode with an escort of the richest tradesmen of London. However, his affairs must

even then have begun to go wrong, for in 1695 he failed for what was then the very large mercantile investment of £17,000. He made a composition with his creditors, gave what he could on his debts, and is said afterwards to have paid every cent of his obligation.

It was at this period of his fallen fortunes that he wrote, though he did not publish till two years afterwards, the "Essay on Projects," of which Benjamin Franklin said that its opinions had influenced the chief events of his life.

The essay outlines for the better guidance of the affairs of the country a number of policies of such foresight that nearly all of them have since become established institutions in England —a scheme for a national bank, for road improvements, for a bankruptcy commission, aid and benefit societies, for raising internal revenue, and for the education of women.

But the chief interest of the "Essay on Projects" is its exhibition of De Foe's constant clear curiosity about the management of life and what Samuel Butler calls the "ways and farings of men." To be forming a plan—and an admirable plan—for establishing a bank for his country, at a moment when he chanced to be

£17,000 in debt: here was a spirit of no common strength.

The "Essay on Projects" was, even before its publication, the source of a change in its author's prospects. An acquaintance brought to the attention of William III De Foe's internal revenue scheme. This was in part adopted; and, in the furtherance of the plan, De Foe was made the government accountant for the tax on the glass industry. Partly through the prestige his occupation gave him, he formed a company for manufacturing the tiles the country had heretofore imported from Holland. He became the manager of this company which was established on the Thames at Tooting. Here he lived in good style, and kept a coach and a pleasure boat.

III

When it is said that among the nine or ten pamphlets issued by De Foe within the next few years one was a commentary on the government's protection of vice among persons with means—what we should call police protection—and one an attack on the bribery and corruption prevailing in the disposal of seats in Par-

liament, it will be seen that exposure through special articles published in an inexpensive form is by no means a recent invention.

One of these corrupted Parliaments, in 1701, refused to consider King William's request for subsidies for that continental campaign against the horrors of the Inquisition, which was certainly a part of the liberation war of humanity. One thousand freeholders and electors of Kent sent to the House of Commons, through five representatives, a signed petition asking the House to hear and pass upon the subsidy measure. The five Kentish petitioners' request was denied by the House, their petition voted seditious, and they were cast into prison.

Eight days later, as Robert Harley, the Speaker, was entering the House of Commons, De Foe, guarded by sixteen gentlemen, handed him a letter headed with this note:

"Mr. Speaker:

"The enclosed memorial you are charged with in behalf of many thousands of the good people of England. . . . You are commanded by two hundred thousand Englishmen to deliver it to the House of Commons."

The enclosure was De Foe's famous Legion

Letter. It demanded the release of the petitioners, and the hearing of their petition; and stated the grievances of the nation at the hands of the present Parliament, and the legal rights of the electors to control their representatives.

"Thus, gentlemen," it concludes eloquently, "you have your duty laid before you, which 'tis hoped you will think of, but if you continue to neglect it you may expect to be treated according to the resentment of an injured nation. For Englishmen are no more to be slaves to Parliaments than to kings.

"Our name is Legion and we are Many."

"Postscript. If you require to have this Memorial signed with our names, it shall be done on your first order, and personally presented."

"The paper," Wilson says, "struck such a terror into the Party in the House, that from that time there was not a word ever spoken of proceeding against the Kentish petitioners; and the members of that Party began to drop off, and to get into the country."

When Parliament adjourned a few weeks later, the Kentish gentlemen were released. A banquet was given for them in the Mercer's Hall by the City of London; and the succeeding Par-

liament considered and indorsed the grant of subsidies for the King.

De Foe's yeoman service to his party in all this brought him back much of the favor he had lost by a pamphlet on the Test Act, written two years before—a pamphlet now destined to have, in connection with his next considerable piece of public work, a very strange effect upon his future history.

Since the time when Dissenters had been excluded from all government offices unless they took the Sacrament of the Episcopal Church, or were fined for breaking the law, many of them had evaded the stringency of the act by taking government office and fulfilling the provisions of the ordinance by an occasional attendance at Episcopal churches for receiving Communion. This practice was called Occasional Conformity. As the good feeling between Episcopalians and Dissenters increased in William's reign, Occasional Conformity became more frequent and Dissenters more and more complaisant in their assent to a rite in which they had no faith. De Foe, who seems in holding his own office always to have stoutly paid his fine and never to have asserted a belief not his, criti-

cized adversely his party's and sect's increasing custom in an essay which aroused wide indignation.

Four years afterwards, when King William died and his sister-in-law, Anne, a strong though not a bigoted Episcopalian, came to the throne, her coronation roused the Tory Party and the Established Church to introduce in Parliament a bill excluding Dissenters from all participation in the government of England upon any terms. It was called the Bill against Occasional Conformity; and, naturally, caused a party struggle of the fiercest virulence.

At this moment De Foe struck the bill a body blow by a highly original device. This was an anonymous pamphlet purporting to be written by an Episcopalian; and is an ironical though well merited statement of the High-Church position. It is called "The Shortest Way with Dissenters."

"Shall any law be given to such wild creatures [as these Dissenters]. Some beasts are for sport, and the huntsmen give them the advantages of ground: but some are knocked on the head by all possible means of violence and surprise. . . . If one severe law were made and

punctually executed, that whoever was found at a Conventicle should be banished the Nation, and the preacher hanged, we should soon see an end of the tale."

As De Foe afterwards tells us, "The case the book pointed at was to speak the first person of the party and then thereby not only speak their language but acknowledge it to be theirs: which they did so openly that confounded all their attempts afterwards to deny it, and to call it a scandal thrown upon them by another."

This is exactly what happened. The High-Church Party applauded with delight and entire gravity the arguments and plans of "The Shortest Way." One of the Tory leaders wrote: "Next to the Holy Bible and the Sacred Comments I take it for the most valuable piece I have."

The more moderate of the High-Church Party were, however, so shocked at the unfairness of spirit on their own side that the pamphlet had revealed and proved, that they would not push the Bill against Occasional Conformity. It was defeated in the House of Lords.

The world is very literal minded. Not only the Tories but the Dissenters misunderstood

"The Shortest Way." They were raising a great hue and cry against the anonymous Episcopalian author, when it became known that he was a Dissenter—that he was Daniel De Foe.

At this both parties turned the more furiously against him. De Foe was proclaimed an enemy of the State, who had stirred up sedition. A reward of £50 was offered for his arrest. The government proclamation and advertisement gives us the clearest description we have of his appearance, that of

"A middle-aged, spare man about forty years old, of a brown complexion and dark-brown coloured hair (but wears a wig), a hooked nose, a sharp chin, gray eyes and a large mole near the mouth."

Upon his arrest he received an unfair trial with treacherous counsel. He was sentenced to pay two hundred marks to the Queen; to stand three times in the pillory; and to be imprisoned during the Queen's pleasure.

The moderate Harley was out of power. William Penn appeared three times before the House of Commons to plead in vain for a commutation of this mean and brutal sentence.

De Foe was pilloried on July 29, 1703, at Tem-

ple Bar. During the next day he was pilloried at Cheapside near the road where he had once ridden so proudly with the escort of William and Mary. Through the thirty-first he was pilloried at Cornhill where he had once been an owner of one of the richest textile houses in the trade of London.

On each occasion admiring and cheering crowds guarded him to and from his punishment as though it had been a position of state. They hung the pillory with garlands; and placed tables in the streets where they sat drinking his health and singing the satirical "Hymn to the Pillory" which had been composed by De Foe in Newgate, and was now cried and sold from the pavements of Cheapside, Cornhill and Temple Bar.

Inspiring is defiance in the face of squalid adversities. What could be carried off with a more highhanded flash of style than that part of the unmelodious but energetic "Hymn to the Pillory" where De Foe taunts his enemies who have put him there with their poor inability to have written "The Shortest Way with Dissenters."

> Hail Hieroglyphic state machine
> Contrived to punish Fancy in
> . . . . . .

Tell us who 'tis upon thy ridge stands there,
So full of fault and yet so void of fear.

. . . . . .

Tell us the men that placed him here
Are scandals to the times,
Are at a loss to find his guilt,
And *can't* commit his crimes.

Undoubtedly it was the sheer pluck of De Foe's character that stirred popular enthusiasm. Probably only a very few persons in the cheering throngs who sang his conceited amusing song understood it, or grasped that De Foe was pilloried because, while he had ridiculed the Dissenters for their conformity when this had been a mere demoralizing hypocrisy among them, he now opposed the Episcopalians' effort against this same conformity of the Dissenters, because the Episcopalians' effort was the expression of mere bigotry.

De Foe remained in Newgate for two years. In this space of time, on account of his absence from the tile factory, he became again a ruined man. His family fell into poverty. He occupied his hours in prison by a non-lucrative but absorbing enterprise.

IV

From the walls of Newgate De Foe sent out by his devoted printer, at first once a week, and then three times a week, a periodical called *The Review.*

The Review presented at regular intervals, for the first time in the print of our language, public and domestic topics of general interest. It is impossible to say whether one feels more glory or more shame for journalism in the fact that our first newspaper was written and edited by a man imprisoned in the interest of a just testimony to truth.

In the following year, Harley again came into power in Parliament, and at once released De Foe and found government employment for him as an agent in the negotiation of the union with Scotland.

Now, for more than ten years De Foe was engaged in serving the government in this capacity, in publishing his review, and in pamphleteering. In a fairly short time after his release he had again repaired his fallen fortunes.

But it must not be thought that his prosperity was peaceful. This a writer of De Foe's temper

of mind, a follower of truth irrespective of party, and a discusser on these terms of the affairs and politics of his time could hardly have expected, or perhaps desired, in a world whose standard of honor was, even more than today, simply a standard of continuous and undiscriminating partisanship.

"Though a Protestant," says Windsor, "when the bill for preventing the growth of popery in Ireland had been forced upon the Queen, De Foe took part with the Roman Catholics against the bigotry of Protestantism. Though a friend of Godolphin he was always regarded with esteem by Harley. Though a friend of Harley he refused to support him on the subject of peace."

This is no road to popularity. De Foe had bitter enemies in all the political camps. At the time of Anne's death he was so surrounded by controversial and slanderous attacks, that on his retirement from office in 1715, he published a pamphlet entitled "An Appeal to Honor and Justice," explaining his public stand on all the policies and sects he had defended and those he had opposed.

With this vow he retired from his open connection with the government on Queen

Anne's death; but not long afterwards he began and continued for many years a secret service of the most singular character for the Crown.

The successive ministers of George I privately paid him for contributing to, and partly owning, first one Jacobite newspaper, and later as many as three of these journals, on a secret understanding of his with the administration that he would, as he says, "take the sting out of them."

Much controversy has surrounded the ethics of this piece of conduct on De Foe's part. In his letter on the subject he exhibits a considerable pride in the occupation, and plainly plumes himself on his companionable hours with the Jacobites and what he calls "the enraged High-Tories." Undoubtedly he thoroughly enjoyed making the Jacobites believe he was of their camp. Controversy and disapproval may rage as they will. De Foe's own attitude about deceiving the Jacobites is only too clearly like that of the Islanders of Rum-ti-Foo, in the "Bab Ballads."

> Their decent clothes they learned to tear.
> They learned to say "We do not care,"
> Though they were very well aware
> How folks who say so end.

And, after all, surely this was an astonishingly open kind of deceit. The Jacobites through their own public party organs were imperceptibly to themselves to be turned into a species of Whigs. To a person with De Foe's peerless genius for literary masquerade this odd project must have possessed an irresistible charm. Such a trick would be a bagatelle to the author of the vivid hoax of "The Shortest Way with Dissenters," and to one whose pen had persuaded the English Parliament that he and sixteen other gentlemen were Legion.

There can be no doubt that De Foe loved to lead national parties by the nose by remarkable and striking wiles. He was thoroughly in his element as the center of intriguing brilliant and novel political schemes. He did not in the least object to being the center, and was clearly all his life long the kind of man—so often darkly disapproved by persons of more native obscurity —who "does not mind attracting attention." The peculiar irascibility and somewhat self-righteous air of slight displayed against him by many of his contemporaries may easily be accounted for by his obvious histrionic vanity.

V

De Foe was now in his sixtieth year, and while in the thick of his Jacobite journal scheme he wrote and published anonymously his first extended work of fiction: "The Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe."

From this point, at the age of sixty, he set forth on the pioneer work of a great English novelist —literally the first English novelist. For the next eleven years he exercised in fresh fields his ruling passion for original design.

"The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe," "The Journal of the Plague Year," "The Memoirs of a Cavalier," "Colonel Jack," "The Fortunes and Misfortunes of Moll Flanders," "Roxana or the Fortunate Mistress"—all these following narratives of the next decade are unique and creative compositions executed with first-hand force and conviction.

"It has happened," Charles Lamb says, "that from no inferior merit of execution in the rest, but from superior good-fortune in the choice of a subject, some single work shall have been suffered to eclipse and cast into shade the deserts of its less fortunate brethren. . . . In no instance

has this excluding partiality been exerted with more unfairness than against . . . the novels of De Foe. While all ages and descriptions of people hang delighted over 'The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe,' and shall continue to do so, we trust, while the world lasts, how few comparatively will bear to be told that 'Roxana,' 'Singleton,' 'Moll Flanders,' 'Colonel Jack,' are all genuine offspring of the same father. . . . They are in their way as full of incident and some of them every bit as romantic: only they want the uninhabited island, and the charm that has bewitched the world of the striking solitary situation.

"But are there no solitudes out of the cave and the desert? Or cannot the heart in the midst of crowds feel frightfully alone? *Singleton,* on the world of waters, prowling about with pirates less merciful than the creatures of any howling wilderness: is he not alone, with the faces of men about him?"

Everyone knows *Robinson Crusoe*—the footprint—the death of the goat—the making of the umbrella and the table and the chair—the inimitable conversation with *Friday* when he asks why God cannot forgive the Devil as well as the

Lost Sheep of Israel—and the return with the rescued captain and his crew—among them a man who chanced also to be named Robinson. (It may be parenthetically remarked that this last touch alone would reveal a born master in methods of realizing a scene to his readers in all the bright mosaic of the curious colors of life.)

Less familiar is "The Journal of the Plague Year"—a history of the plague, purporting to have been written by a citizen living in London during the pestilence. No one who reads it will, I think, question De Foe's editorial power of synthetic statement, of choosing well the various materials, voices, journals and letters and official documents that make the truth of a great actual story really live in the public mind.

The dread of contagion, the horror of the frequent tolling bells and dead-carts, the silent streets, the lines of the doorways of the afflicted houses guarded by sentinels and marked with tall red crosses, the presence of pain and mortality, and then the rising breath of relief, the lessened fatality of the disease, the lessening numbers of the sick, the returning of the citizens who had fled the stricken city, and at last, again, the merciful flow and hurry of London's full,

normal activity—all these are experiences the reader lives in "The Journal of the Plague Year": and here De Foe shows at its height his genius for writing like Legion.

Like the writing of Legion, too, is the "Memoirs of a Cavalier." Battle after battle, siege after siege, Magdeburg, Leipsic, Augsburg, Naseby and Marston Moor, armies marching and countermarching, camp and slaughter and rapine—you sit and watch all this passing before you with the full consciousness of the presence and movement of multitudes.

In "Moll Flanders," "Colonel Jack" and "Roxana," as in this war chronicle and in "The Journal of the Plague Year," De Foe is a guide through the wilds of civilization. No swamp of misery is too miasmatic or tangled for him to push through. He will walk among the worst jungles of the wretchedness, cruelty and brutishness of men. Someone has said that many of the novels of Zola are indecent but moral: and the same discrimination may truthfully be repeated of these three tales of De Foe. It would, I think, betray a deep lack of human sympathy and imagination on De Foe's part if he had told these stories to the reader without con-

veying any sense of shock. It is right that they should be as shocking as they are.

"The Fortunes and Misfortunes of Moll Flanders" is the autobiography of a thief, a parish charge and a waif, educated to be a servant, wronged by one master, married by another who dies, and then by a husband who deserts her. In her poverty she falls among pickpockets and evil and vicious companions. She is condemned to the gallows for attempting to steal two pieces of flowered silk. Through the efforts of a clergyman her sentence is commuted; she is transported to the American colonies; and here contrives to work out her salvation on land of her own with her deserting and returned husband.[1]

"Colonel Jack" is the autobiography of a thief who reforms rather early in life—at the age of twenty-six—becomes a planter, then a half-hearted Jacobite and adventurer, and at last goes back again to the soil and an Evangelical repentance.

The beautiful *Roxana* is the most considerable creature portrayed in any of De Foe's nar-

[1] Within the last few years, M. Marcel Schwob's translation of "Moll Flanders" has been one of the most successful books of the day in France.

ratives of vicious lives. After *Roxana* with her five children is deserted by her husband, a conceited brewer, she abandons her children to various hard fates with his relatives, and becomes the mistress of a jeweler who dies leaving her a large fortune. The account of her days is first that of a triumphant progress through riotous living attended by royal lovers and patrons; and then, when she wearies of riotous living, of an equally triumphant progress in the guise of a Quaker widow, through respectability to a marriage with a rich and noble merchant. When he learns her past he can forgive her everything but her meanness to her children. This estranges him completely. He goes away from her, settling on her the merest provision for the necessities of life. After his death, she rashly ventures this in unwise speculation; loses it all, and is thrown for debt into the debtor's prison where she dies.

Undoubtedly in all these tremendous stories of human warfare, success and defeat, there are passages both dull and crass and many moments when one feels that the author's habit of constant mental reference to the Nonconformist faith limits the free truth of his chron-

icle. Nevertheless they are tremendous stories of mortal struggle, moving and vital world stories, unafraid to show all the colors of truth.

In the composition of these great novels, De Foe seems at the last, like the Japanese artist of Mr. La Farge's anecdote, to walk into his own painting and disappear. We have little record of the end of his days. He died of a lethargy, away from home. From a sad letter of his to a son-in-law one gathers that he was in poverty from giving up all his estate in trust for himself and for his daughters to a son who deceived him. He mentions his religion, however, in this letter with courage and hope, and it is impossible to conceive De Foe in circumstances where he would not have found a considerable mental consolation.

VI

One afternoon before I had ever read anything of De Foe's but "Robinson Crusoe," I chanced to see quoted in a book someone had left lying open on a library table these words of his:

"He that hath truth on his side, is a fool as well as a coward, if he is afraid to own it be-

cause of the multitude of other men's opinions. 'Tis hard for a man to say all the world is mistaken but himself. But if it be so who can help it."

What makes style? It was as though the voice of Daniel De Foe spoke from the book as actually as the voice of my friend who now came in ready for walking. And when these chance words led me to read De Foe and his biography, these were the story of a man who would have thought himself a fool not to own the truth he knew.

He could own it by following the cause of the Duke of Monmouth through Edgemoor and the Bloody Circuit; and in the "Essay on Projects"; and in the defiance of Parliament in the Legion letter. He could own it by being pilloried for justice to Dissenters and churchmen alike, and by masquerading as a Jacobite to mitigate the excesses of the Tory press, and by telling in many forms of fiction that true story which was after all the history of his own life and will be the history of ours—the story of the soul of man in the midst of an unknown wilderness.

When *Friday* cuts his father's bonds, and

Moll Flanders sleeps on the deck planks of the transport, you breathe with them the wide air of the stories of peoples. You traverse the globe, and you share De Foe's wonderful sense of the globe itself, its lands and waters, and the better and baser and constantly changing customs of its many nations. You are a part of the march of events; of the state of civilization, and of the responsible world of men.

Besides this fine pleasure you feel in your hours with *Crusoe* and *Captain Singleton,* and with *Roxana* and *Moll Flanders,* a deep, searching pride in the human faculty of contrivance and direction. This faculty of inquiring thoroughly into any difficult situation, and devising a wise way out of it, is presented with unequaled fascination by De Foe. No prejudices nor customs will balk his curiosity or his determination of moving towards the light.

This peculiar tone of bright and merciful curiosity and clear-thinking ingenuity throughout De Foe's work is indescribably beautiful and imparts a crystal splendor to all the labors of his lifetime. With a deep realization of the struggles, baseness and injustices of the world, you turn away at last from the spectacle of his

long, brave existence of ups and downs, and from the multitudinous universe his writings present, as you turn away from the sight of the mountain forests in the morning light—refreshed with a new wonder and courage.

STEPHEN CRANE

WHATEVER is deeply thought is well written, in the view of M. Rémy de Gourmont. The observation has an aërial beauty. From its outlook one instinctively casts a revisiting glance of speculation at well written places in expression one had lost a while, to find how deeply thought they are.

In this speculative glance, not long since, I chanced to be arrested by the memory of Stephen Crane. Endowed with a genius for direct expression, he was able in his short existence to present a surprising number of penetrating ascertainments of American life, with a high degree of clarity and power.

One encounters occasionally a popular conception of Stephen Crane as the author of one or two slight prose tales, and a few lines of grotesque verse—a writer of fragmentary achievement, with a talent of distinct originality, but somewhat narrow. The conception has come

into being doubtless from our widespread custom of asking concerning each subsequent work of an author whether it is just like his first book, and of ignoring the subsequent work if it is not. With many authors this is the only means we have of supporting a certain, correct traditional attitude of consistent disappointment in their efforts. The prevalence of the attitude is attested by the celebrated response of a veteran editor of *Punch* to a friend's remark that *Punch* wasn't as good as it used to be: "No, it never was."

To interested readers of Stephen Crane's work, no impression of it could be further than the fabular repute we have mentioned from the facts of his productive career as a writer. Before his death in his thirtieth year, Stephen Crane had published eleven books. While none of these is a large book, it is true, they are for the most part of remarkable concentration and substance, and of a marked variety in subject, in kind, in tone and in treatment—historical essays, special articles, poetry and fiction; among these publications there are perhaps forty short stories, and five very dissimilar brief novels, ranging from the sustained tragedy of

"Maggie" to mockery's lightest touch in "The Third Violet."

I

"The line of Sesshu," says a critic of Japanese line drawing, "vibrates with the nervous force of the artist's hand." With the exception of "Active Service," a work composed, as one understands, in illness, and two or three of the Mexican tales which are rather standardized and weakly handled, the description might characterize all these contributive pieces of fiction.

The world of misery, the world of poverty, the very presence of exploiting meanness, of the impulse to pride oneself on using human beings and casting them aside, rise in the tale of "Maggie." A story of the "poor among the poor," of a warm-hearted, pleasure-loving girl, a stitcher in a collar factory, who is betrayed and deserted by a barkeeper and remains in poverty through the last despair of unsuccess in her final calling as a street walker, the novel is all narrated in the first-hand terms of crowded life, the terms of the life of New York tenements, tenement streets, and saloons, selectively

rendered, without comment, without shallow judgments, with the searching and complete humor of the desire of truth in our exploitational world where *Maggie's* exploiter is himself exploited.

Much "happens," undoubtedly, in both this book and "George's Mother"—sins, shames, gayeties, injustices. Delicately analytical, the method of the narratives spreads no analysis upon the page. They proceed by a realization of the movement, color, sound, odor, form and contact of their scene and incident, wrought by struggling characters in their course through the wilds of a random civilization.

One touch of dullness which makes many novels kin, purporting falsely to be realistic, is a lack of unified expression. Relating much about lives, they tell us nothing about life. They fail in the power of seizing some one positive, though hitherto undiscriminated, aspect of creation—something as actual and yet as intangible as the look of an individual countenance—and thus miss the nameless fusion which illuminates a realized presentment. It is in this faculty of penetrating social criticism, of a vivid, well-chosen focus of the human circles

and aims he presents, that Stephen Crane excels and interests.

We have no more spirited portrait of the mob-meanness of our democracy—the peculiarly American disgrace that shames us among nations—than his short story, "The Monster," a chronicle of the cruelty of the people of an Eastern town to a negro maimed in recovering from a fire the child of the town's best doctor. The completely miserable performance of these people; their laudation of poor *Henry Johnson;* their editorial on his heroism when it is supposed he is dead; and their disapprobation of him after he is saved by *Dr. Trescott's* skill and returns to live among them, in his disfigurement and idiocy, faceless, and horrible to look upon; their insistence that he be taken out of the town to spare their sensibilities; and their desertion and ruin of the career of *Dr. Trescott,* his one friend—all this is of the best stuff of tragedy, a living likeness of the wilds of a cowardly tyranny, splendidly and thoroughly understood and told, and of the same piece of appreciation of the minds and motives of men as Kent's blinding.

II

If the pity and terror of democracy's mob-meanness are vividly revealed by Stephen Crane, so is the inspiration and swing of democracy's impulse to keep in line.

"On the morning of July 2nd, I sat on San Juan Hill and watched Lawton's division come up. I was absolutely sheltered, but still where I could look into the faces of men who were trotting up under fire. There wasn't a high heroic face among them. They were all men intent on business. That was all. It may seem to you that I am trying to make everything a squalor. That would be wrong. I feel that things were of the sublime. They were not of our shallow and preposterous fictions. They stood out in a simply majestic commonplace. It was the behavior of men on the street. It was the behavior of men. In one way, each man was just pegging along at the heels of the man before him, who was pegging along at the heels of still another man who— It was that in the flat and obvious way. In another way it was pageantry, the pageantry of the accomplishment of naked duty. One cannot speak of it—

the spectacle of the common man serenely doing his work, his appointed work. It is the one thing in the universe which makes one fling expression to the winds and be satisfied to simply feel."

This passage from a special article in "War Memories" is quoted not only as an instance of Stephen Crane's manner in giving the reader the peculiar special light on the countenance of the situation he describes, but as an example of the extraordinary directness of that manner.

III

"Direct treatment of subject." In the last few years we have heard the phrase much used by the Imagists. Stephen Crane's two slender volumes of verse, "The Black Riders" and "War is Kind," have just now a timely interest from their achievement in a certain art of poetic expression regarded by numbers of persons —though certainly not, one believes, by the Imagists themselves—as only recently attempted. As both Stephen Crane and most of the Imagists are American poets it is curious to compare their likeness and divergence on this special point—"direct treatment of subject"—which is,

according to Mr. Richard Aldington, the Imagists' first tenet.

To my own perception, with all deference to the Imagists' seriousness of purpose, and with a liking for their poetry though by no means an abject worship of it, this direct treatment in which Stephen Crane's verses excel is an art absent even from the aim of most of the poems the Imagists themselves regard as their most distinctive work—poems such as "After Ch'u Youan," "Acon (after Joannes Baptista Amaltheus)" and "To Atthis (after the Mss. of Sappho now in Berlin)."

With the same brevity, exactitude and simplicity of outline which characterize Stephen Crane's verses, these poems of the Imagists treat certain situations in existence, by no means in the method of a straightforward, first-hand understanding, but very indirectly, and through the media of certain remote, approved civilizations and habits of thought. Their charm, the charm of classic echo or historic fancy, has the scholarly grace and lovely refinement of line of a Wedgewood design. But this treatment of subject, while both simple and precise, is by no means direct. Akin to the Imagists' work in

several attractive attributes, in this peculiar quality of an authentic, first-hand vision Stephen Crane's poems seem to me to evince a far deeper and better conception than the Imagists' of direct expression in poetry.

Here is a love poem:

> Should the wide world roll away,
> Leaving black terror,
> Limitless night,—
> Nor God, nor man, nor place to stand
> Would be to me essential
> If thou and thy white arms were there,
> And the fall to doom a long way.

Here is a characterization:

> With eye and with gesture
> You say you are holy.
> I say you lie.
> For I did see you
> Draw away your coats
> From the sin upon the hands
> Of a little child.
> Liar!

IV

Who are the men who are creators? Who will express truly the quality of his own knowledge of life, and leave behind a moving image that he has conceived of our own mortal ways

—our little ways and large ways, in a fast-changing universe?

Such a creator was Stephen Crane. In his static lines of verse, in the lyric movement of his stories, vibrate unforgettable and authentic moods of the very nature of our country—the smell of the wet turf along the shaded house-walls, the pluming maple tops, the muteness of neighbor and neighbor, the scorching breath of injustice, the air of wartime memories on cloudy bluff and valley, the wind's will blowing through the soul of youth, death in struggle everywhere, and the strength of love stronger than death, and the failures and the prides of our mortality.

> Oh, nothing, nothing, commonest things,
> A touch, a sound, a glimpse, a breath!

Again you turn, and look again and listen to the sense and spirit of his clear-voiced pages, and perceive you had forgotten how well written they are in remembering how deeply they are thought.

THE DISLIKE OF HUMAN INTEREST

Why are Stephen Crane's novels out of print? Why did Frank Norris' remarkable "Vandover and the Brute" remain unpublished for twenty years?

Why is one always meeting in life and the pages of reviews people who evince a deep, smoldering and ignorant grudge against the fiction of George Meredith, Zola, Henry James, William Dean Howells, Gorky, Edith Wharton, Hermann Sudermann, George Gissing, May Sinclair, Thomas Hardy—and of everyone else who knows and tells anything at all about the real lives of men and women?

Why do many people feel a profound confidence—and ability to remain awake—in reading the pages of Jeffrey Farnol, Thomas Dixon, and "The Salamander"?

It was not until recently that a theory occurred to me which would explain all these various phenomena—the theory of the existence of

a serious national dislike, and even disapproval, of human interest in letters.

According to this theory the reason why many people enjoy and trust Jeffrey Farnol, Thomas Dixon, and "The Salamander" is because they need not fear encountering in their pages a single credible human being.

The reason for the quiet ignorant grudge entertained by these readers against the array of realists mentioned is that such an audience perceives from afar that these authors are forever creating believable human characters, and forever making about them new discriminations which are true to life.

Besides, a strong practical reason in America for a resentment against the appearance of the human figure in fiction is the great inconvenience it causes among the large and justly respected classes of people I once heard described by Nicholas Vachel Lindsay as "Sorters"—professional readers, book reviewers and advertisers. "Fiction in America" someone—I think Henry James—has said, "is not an Art, but an Industry." Receiving fiction constantly, in bales, in tons, in overwhelming masses, nearly all the hard-working Sorters can

do is hastily to assort the invoices into labeled bins, so to speak.

It can readily be understood, under these arduous conditions, how much difficulty is occasioned by works of fiction which are not readily classifiable, but present the variety human life presents, and are peopled by human persons who may do any sort of act on earth, totally outside the lines indicated by the labels. Human life is so unstandardized, so unstable and plastic that concerning every manuscript presenting it a reader has to formulate a new opinion, and when it is published the advertiser has to formulate a new kind of advertisement and then a reviewer has to formulate a new kind of review. There is no evading the cruel fact. Contributive fiction of human interest is constitutionally so constructed that it is always committing the most serious American crime: *It makes trouble in the office.*

I know the claim is constantly advanced that Sorters welcome all new expression in letters with delight. From their point of view this has always seemed to me to be absolutely true. But it should be remembered that their point of view is not that of the mere retail buyer and private

enjoyer of books; and they commonly use the terms mentioned, not in our weak, general sense, but in a strong, limited technical manner. For example, by "new expression" they refer not to original style, nor contributive matter, but to expression as much as possible like something else which has recently been in vogue. Thus by "the new poetry" Sorters do not mean original poetry, but poetry which can be seen at a glance to be something like that whose revival was originated by Ezra Pound—not Ezra Pound's poetry.

These technical usages are caused not by the lack of penetration or by the injustice of Sorters, but by the large, wholesale circumstances of their industry. American Sorters ought not to be blamed for opposing fiction or verse of fresh interest. As soon as any fairminded person sees how it holds back their work he is overwhelmed at the generosity they frequently exhibit towards it.

Another cause of our objection to novels and stories of human interest in the United States is our custom of reading the magazines. Though in a public-spirited and occasional manner our periodicals sometimes print fiction delineating

individualized human figures, no one who reads their pages will, I think, deny that the great trend of their purpose is to reproduce what one can only call the New York standard patterns —standard pattern stories of the Klondike; and of Pittsburg millionaires; and of ruffianism in the Philippines; and of actresses seated in those large, luxuriously appointed dressing rooms which are so prevalent in our theaters; delightful pattern stories of our medical circles, peopled by keen-eyed doctors with iron-gray hair, and inspired chiefly by psychological interest in their patients; stories of simple-hearted, ungrammatical California ranchmen; and of those large-jowled, small-brained, predatory men of wealth who form the New-York-magazine male population of Chicago; and of cold, sophisticated New York clubmen who learn to love little children; or cold, fashionable children who learn to love their parents, or cold fashionable parents who learn to love their children; and the same with reversible attachments for grandparents, grandchildren and married persons in all sizes; and humorous stories expressing all the quaint life outside New York, Chicago and the great centers, and presenting farmers with bandannas

and chin whiskers, who are seeing a motor car for the first time.

Behind much of this ridiculous misrepresentation—or lack of representation—of life in American fiction there is a deeper cause. It should, I think, be honestly admitted that the extraordinary prevalence in America of absurd and mechanical fiction is largely due to a certain national characteristic in which we are simply inferior to the English and European nations. Among all the humanities, fiction is the most profoundly socializing entertainment the soul of man has to offer; and Americans are thin-blooded and shallow, and willing to be exploitational, concerning public entertainment.

We are ashamed when our fellow citizens are cheated in land frauds, or duped in get-rich-quick schemes, but concerning their amusements we apparently feel a complacent agreement with P. T. Barnum's maxim that the American people loves to be humbugged. Partly from a poor-spirited Puritan tradition that recreation is in itself a trivial unworthiness, partly from a right desire to be liberal about other people's tastes, most American people have lost or never have had the Hellenic and

democratic decency of community pride in their public enjoyments. We never have learned to think greatly, or even very sincerely, of our popular, social and esthetic pleasures as something greatly liberating and enkindling. Our more snobbish view of the matter is that something rather cynically proffered, something rather trashy and beneath our own enjoyment, is the right kind of popular pleasure for the masses. The impulse that piled up the magnificence of Notre Dame for multitudes, that poured the music of the Rheingold and the Valkyries over the earth, and set the whole world laughing with the quick ironies and incomparable airs and gayeties of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas seems lacking in our own native, civic temper.

This deficiency is perhaps the most basic reason of our national distrust of keen, human interest in American Letters.

VANDOVER AND THE BRUTE

WHAT makes a good novel?

For this reader whatever piece of fiction gives her genuine news about human life. For this taste or bent in reading, whichever it may be considered, one of our most excellent writers of "a good novel" is Frank Norris.

"Vandover and the Brute," first published in 1914, and written by Frank Norris in 1894–5, twenty years before, lives up to its classification as a novel, a word which must, I think, have implied to the originators of that title the presentation of something new.

In this definition the publication of novels is extremely rare in this country. Yet, instead of thanking fortune wisely for the fact that the present book was ever printed, the admirers of Frank Norris' fiction are far more likely to ask why its publication was delayed for twenty years.

I

The "Vandover" preface by Charles G. Norris tells us that the manuscript was laid aside while Frank Norris was writing and publishing "MacTeague," was left in a San Francisco warehouse, was then supposed for many years after the author's death to have been lost in the earthquake and the fire, was then found by the warehouse company, though without the author's name attached to it, and left unread for seven years, and was then read and recognized though not published for another year.

While all these causes remain valid excuses for delay one cannot help suspecting that they were not the underlying reason for such a long overlooking of a vital book. One cannot help remembering that most of the book world and the magazine world of Frank Norris' career, and of the years following it, was occupied with the activities which culminated throughout our land in the flowering of knighthood, and in what may be called the movement for suppressing all news about human life in fiction.

While one may have no quarrel with knighthood, and indeed may respect the muscular con-

trol of those who can remain awake through its flowering, one cannot help thinking that if Frank Norris had written an early novel more like it than this is, or had written, let us say, a bad imitation of Anthony Hope, somehow this work would not have been lost to us for twenty years.

It not only would have been promptly published, but much with us late and soon. And, whatever the immediate causes, one cannot help feeling that the historical reason why "Vandover and the Brute" has been so long overlooked has been that it would naturally possess, in the field occupied by the great movements described, the unimportance inevitably attaching under these conditions to all fiction animated by a genuine human interest.

One cannot help knowing that if Frank Norris had been an English and not an American realist, a novel of his would somehow not have undergone such an amount of jugglery and postponement before its publication as it has before its American appearance.

II

The novel is the dramatic story of the struggle between the brute on one hand, a man's tendency to self-indulgence—and *Vandover* on the other, his character, his will, his heart, his resolution to "make something of himself" in the course of his existence upon earth.

The tale is told in terms of a knowledge of the actual world of its scene. Here is San Francisco—its beautiful bay, its treacherous coast voyages, its high, splendid sky, its society both vulgar and gentle. In this respect, in its evocation of a city atmosphere, the book is one of Norris' best, far better than "The Pit," with its more perfunctory and unrealized Chicago, far better than "The Octopus," whose landscape imposed on the theme of wheat always seemed, to the present reader at least, to contain really almost too much wheat to be borne.

But in "Vandover" the San Francisco of "before the fire" is simply there. You seem to be walking its pleasant cosmopolitan-peopled streets, so warm in the sun, so cool in the shade.

However, before San Francisco, or after it

has been barely mentioned, is the account of Vandover's Harvard years: and these, too, are described not only with the sincerity which always belongs to Frank Norris, but again without the insistence and hyperbolic heightening characteristic of some of his later work.

Here is the beginning of the struggle in which *Vandover* is engaged so early and unhappily in the temptations of his college days:

"He passed the next few days in a veritable agony of repentance, overwhelmed by a sense of shame and dishonor that were almost feminine in their bitterness and intensity. He felt himself lost, unworthy, and as if he could never again look a pure woman in the eyes, unless with an abominable hypocrisy."

Vandover recovers from his temptation. "What had been bashfulness in the boy developed in the young man to a profound respect and an instinctive regard for women. This stood him in good stead throughout all his four years of Harvard life."

After this, when he returned to San Francisco to study painting, to live alone with his indulgent and devoted father and to rove around in the life of the city, he was gradually corrupted

by the standards of the young business and professional men about him.

"In company with *Geary* and young *Haight* he had come to frequent a certain one of the fast cafés of the city. . . . This time there was no recoil of conscience, no shame, no remorse. . . . After all one had to be a man of the world. . . . Thus it was that *Vandover* by degrees drifted into the life of a certain class of young men in the city. . . . The brute had grown larger in him."

III

The women of the novel are sketched, not elaborated. They are *Flossie,* a girl of the professional underworld; *Ida,* a most moving figure, an innocent girl, a little foolish and wild, with the repute of being fast; and *Turner Ravis,* a "nice" girl by whom *Vandover* is attracted. *Turner,* incompletely as she is sketched, has a charm that recalls *Blix.* Besides she has a character. She has "ideas," and these "ideas" are not mere figments of conversation but dynamic in making her own future. Her reality is heightened not only by the admirable realization of the San Francisco scene about her, but of the

period of the nineties, the time of cotillions and of large sleeves, accurately expressed with considerable grace.

The direction of the story of "Vandover and the Brute" is along the path of its hero's struggle with the temptations of a modern city. The author of the preface marvels "at the courage" which prompted Frank Norris to write a novel "whose love element is hardly more than a sketch." Without stopping to comment on the fact that this is true of numbers of powerful and absorbing novels from "Père Goriot" to "Uncle Tom's Cabin," one must observe that it is not the "love element" which constitutes the force of any other of Frank Norris' novels. Indeed there hardly exists in his writings a breath of that special magic understanding that says:

"My bounty is as boundless as the sea."

The interest of the book, as of his other books, is less in the intensity of its record of the individual romance of a man's and a woman's devotion, than in the large and radical presentation of a social picture.

IV

The nature of the book, then, is that of a very able social criticism. In this the novel has a force that makes it impossible for you to close the volume, once you have opened it, until you have finished its last word.

Charles Norris says the story ran away with the author. It is true. One knows well enough that life would not have been so consistent, or at least not so unremitting in its punishments, nor so violent in its ironies. Debasing dissipation may turn persons literally into groveling beasts. Indeed, while most mature people know this from scientific statement, and undoubtedly the more people who know it, the better, it seems impossible to believe that the most miserable victims of self-indulgence, however evil, are deprived permanently of the power of grammatical speech. Instantly, however, one has made any such objection one regrets it. A posthumous book, especially one issued under the present circumstances, should not be blamed for any lapse. Like *Hamlet's* father it has gone to eternity with its faults unconfessed to its creator, who for aught we can

know to the contrary, had he been sought, might have washed them all away. One is too grateful for another book of Frank Norris to cavil at faults.

This is, in a peculiar sense, a book of Frank Norris. There seems no better way of telling its quality, always as difficult to express for a volume as for a personal presence. It has something so clear-sighted, and at once so hardy, and so concerned with the humanities. It never loses sight of the community point of view. But perhaps its most holding force is its sincerity —the thing in the author's style that makes its pages, as Pope says:

> ". . . pour out all as plain,
> As downright Shippen, or as old Montaigne."

None but the mean can dislike this power of honesty. Something is the matter with all those who do not welcome and honor it, whatsoever be its message.

This is Frank Norris' finest power. Another characteristic, and lesser but strongly attractive faculty of his is plainly revealed in this book. I mean the faculty of improvisation, the ability to create and introduce a lifelike, re-

markable and original situation. In this kind, the shipwreck of the coast steamer in "Vandover" is one of his most arresting performances, perhaps the most sheerly exciting he ever wrote.

Sincerity is a quality Frank Norris could not lose. But the best force of his natural gift for forthright expression as well as the most interesting development of his faculty for improvisation were somewhat deflected for me in the last works from his pen by the obvious fact that these compositions were on the whole too planned, too much built upon predetermined lines of construction, and not enough developed and grown from within by the natural life of each as a creation.

It has always seemed unfortunate to one of their interested readers that either Frank Norris or Arnold Bennett ever heard of a trilogy. Zola's success in the form has, I believe, led sincere Anglo-Saxons into error in this regard. The determination to produce a certain fixed number of novels on a given theme appears more characteristic of what Hazlitt called "a bookmaker" than of what he called "an author"—and to be a little too arbitrary and pre-

ordained for a successful result from the natural temperaments of writers in the English language.

If the texture of "Vandover" suffers from the lack of training as a writer which Frank Norris gained in his later years, especially in his Harvard experience, it is strengthened, I believe, in some respects in being written so freshly and obviously from the author's own native endowment, and in ending with his own natural completion like "MacTeague" and "Blix," uninfluenced by the tendency to standardization which makes "The Octopus" and "The Pit" more like manufactured articles.

"Vandover and the Brute" ends with a touch, an intimation of truth about the result of sin, which says neither too much nor too little. It is a book one is glad to have not only as a good novel which gives to the end its author's sincere convictions and news about human life, but as the work of an American writer whose sustained, conscientious career all his readers must admire.

"TRUE TO LIFE"

A RECENT responsive and beautiful greeting from Mr. John Galsworthy to *The Little Review* suggests that the creative artist and the creative critic in America may wisely heed a saying of de Maupassant about a writer "sitting down before an object until he has seen it in the way that he alone can see it, seen it with the part of him which makes him This man and not That."

Mr. Galsworthy adds: "And I did seem to notice in America that there was a good deal of space and not much time; and that without too much danger of becoming 'Yogis,' people might perhaps sit down a little longer in front of things than they seemed to do."

What native observer of American writing will not welcome the justice of this comment? Surely the contemporary American poems, novels, tales and critiques which express an individual and attentively considered impression of any subject from our own life here are few:

and these not, it would appear, greatly in vogue. Why? Everyone will have his own answer.

In replying to the first part of the question —why closely considered impressions of our life are few—I think it should be said that the habit of respect for close attention of any kind is not among the American virtues. The visitor of our political conventions, the reader of our "literary criticism" must have noted a prevailing, shuffling and perfunctory mood of casual disregard for the matter in hand. Many American people are indeed reared to suppose that if they appear to bestow an interested attention on the matter before them, some misunderstanding will ensue as to their own social importance. Nearly everyone must have noted with a sinking of the heart this attitude towards the public among library attendants, hotel clerks and plumbers. This abstraction is not, however, confined to the pursuers of any occupation but to some degree affects us all. In the consciousness of our nation there appears to exist a mysterious though deep-seated awe for the prestige of the casual and the offhand.

Especially we think it an unworthiness in an

author that he should, as the phrase is, "take himself seriously." We consider the attitude we have described as characterizing hotel clerks as the only correct one for writers—the attitude of a person doing something as it were unconsciously, a matter he pooh-poohs and scarcely cares to expend his energy and time upon in the grand course of his personal existence. You may hear plenty of American authors talk of "not taking themselves seriously," who, if they spoke with accuracy, should say that they regarded themselves as too important and precious to be exhausted by doing their work with conscience.

This dull self-importance insidiously saps in our country the respect for thoroughness and application characteristic of Germany: insidiously blunts in American penetrative faculties the English faculty of being "keen" on a subject, recently presented to us with such grace in the young hero's eager pursuits in Compton Mackenzie's "Sinister Street"; and disparages lightly but often completely the growth of the fresh and varied spirit of production described in the passage of de Maupassant to which Mr. Galsworthy refers. This passage expresses the

clear fire of attention our American habits lack, with a sympathy it is a pleasure to quote here in its entirety. De Maupassant says in the preface of "Pierre et Jean":

"For seven years I wrote verses, I wrote stories, I wrote novels. I even wrote a detestable play. Of these nothing survives. The master [Flaubert] read them all, and on the following Sunday at luncheon he would give me his criticism, and inculcate little by little two or three principles that sum up his long and patient lesson. 'If one has any originality, the first thing requisite is to bring it out: if one has none, the first thing to be done is to acquire it.

" 'Talent is long patience. Everything which one desires must be considered with sufficient attention and during a sufficiently long time to discover in it some aspect which no one has yet seen or described. In everything there is still some spot unexplored, because we are accustomed to look at things only with the recollection of what others before us have thought of the subject we are contemplating. The smallest object contains something unknown. Let us find it. In order to describe a fire that flames and a tree on the plain, we must keep looking at that

flame and that tree, until to our eyes, they no longer resemble any other tree or any other fire.

" 'This is the way to become original.'

"Having besides laid down this truth that there are not in the whole world two grains of sand, two specks, two hands, or two noses alike, Flaubert compelled me to describe in a few phrases a being or an object in such a manner as to clearly particularize it and distinguish it from all other beings or all the other objects of the same race, or the same species. 'When you pass,' he would say, 'a grocer seated at his shop door, a janitor smoking his pipe, a stand of hackney coaches, show me that grocer, and that janitor, their attitude, their whole physical appearance, including also by a skillful description their whole moral nature so that I cannot confound them with any other grocer or any other janitor: make me see, in one word, that a certain cab-horse does not resemble the fifty others that follow or precede it.' "

One underlying reason why American writers so seldom pursue such studies and methods as these is the prevailing disesteem for clearly focused attention we have described. Another reason is that the American writer of fiction who

loves the pursuit of precise expression will indubitably have to face a number of difficulties which perhaps may not be readily apparent to the writers of other countries.

Naturally enough, in his more newly settled, or rather his settling, nation, made up of many nationalities, the American writer who desires to "particularize" a subject from his country's contemporary history, and to "distinguish this from all the other beings and all the other objects of the same race," will have many more heretofore unexpressed conditions and basic circumstances to evoke in his reader's mind than the German or French or English writer must summon.

For instance, the young French writer of de Maupassant's narrative, who was to call up out of the deep of European life the individuality of one single French grocer, would himself have and would address an audience who had—whether for better or worse (to my way of thinking, as it chances, for worse)—a fairly fixed social conception of the class of this retail merchant. The American writer who knows very well that General Grant once kept an unsuccessful shoe store, and that some of the most distinguished

paintings the country possesses have been selected by the admirably educated taste and knowledge of one or two public-spirited retail dry goods merchants; and who also has seen gaunt and poverty stricken Russian storekeepers standing among stalls of rotten strawberries in Jefferson Street market in Chicago—that American writer will have a wider social range of retail shopkeepers than the French author has, to choose from; and will need to be correspondingly more precise in his connotation of the shopkeeper's education and estate.

Nothing in our own random civilization, as it seems to me, is quite so fixed as that French grocer seated in his doorway, that De Maupassant and Flaubert mention with such charm. Nothing here is so neat as that. To convey social truth the American writer interested in giving his own impression of a grocer in America, whether rich or poor or moderately prospering, will have to individualize him and all his surroundings more, and to classify him and all his surrounding conditions less than De Maupassant does, to convey the social truth his own inimitable sketches impart.

Again, ours is a very changing population.

Its movement of life through one of our cities is attended with various and choppy and many-toned sounds communicating a varied rhythm of its own. To return to our figure of the retail tradesman—if this tradesman be in Chicago, for instance, he may neither be expressed clearly by typical classifications, nor shown without a genuine error in historical perspective against a static street background and trade life. This background must have change and motion, unless the writer is to copy into his own picture some foreign author's rendition of a totally different place and state of human existence. The tune of the story's text, too, should repeat for the reader's inward ear the special experience of truth the author has perceived, the special ragged sound and rhythm of the motion of life he has heard telling the tale of that special place.

May one add what is only too obvious, and said because I think it may serve to explain in some degree why individual impressions of American life are not greatly encouraged in this country? It will be quite plain that such a limpid, clear-spaced, reverent style and stilled background as speaks in one of Mr. Galsworthy's stories, the tragedy of a London shoemaker's

commercial ruin, would be false to all these values. It will be quite plain that such a bright, hard, definite manner as that which states with perfection the life of the circles of the government clerk and his wife in "The Necklace" would be powerless to convey some of the elements we have selected as characterizing the American subject we have tried to suggest.

But many American reviewers and professional readers and publishers, who suppose themselves to be devoted to "realism" and to writing of "radical" tendency, believe not at all that the realistic writer should adopt de Maupassant's method and incarnate for us his own American vision of the life he sees here, but simply that he should imitate the manner of de Maupassant. Many such American reviewers and professional readers and publishers believe not at all that the radical writer should find and represent for us some unseen branching root of certain American social phenomena which he himself has detected, but simply that he should copy some excellent drawing of English roots by Mr. Galsworthy, or of Russian roots by Gorky.

The craze for imitation in American writing is almost unbelievably pervasive. The author here

who is devoted to the attempt to speak his own truth—and the more devoted he is the more reverently, I believe, will he regard all other authors' truth as theirs and derived exactly from their own point of view—will find opposed to him not only the great body of conventional romanticists and conservatives, who will think he ought to stereotype and conventionalize his work into a poor, dulled contemporary imitation of the delightful narratives of Sir Walter Scott. He will also find opposed to him the great body of conventional "realists" and "radicals," who will think he ought to stereotype and conventionalize his work into a poor, blurred imitation of the keen narratives of Mr. H. G. Wells.

Sometimes these counselors, not content with commending a copied manner, seriously urge—one might think at the risk of advising plagiarism—that the American author simply transplant the social ideas of some admirable foreign artist to one of our own local scenes. Thus, a year or two ago, in one of our critical journals, I saw the writer of a novel about Indiana state politicians, severely blamed for not making the same observations on the subject that Mr. Wells had made about English parliamentary life in

"The New Machiavelli." Not long since another American reviewer of radical tendency harshly censured the author of a novel about American undergraduate life in a New York college because the daughter of the college president uttered views on sex and marriage unlike those expressed in "Ann Veronica."

This sort of criticism—equally unflattering and obtuse, it appears to me, in its perception of the special characterizations of Mr. Wells' thoughtful pages, and in its counsel to the artist depicting an alien topic to insert extraneous and unrelated views in his landscape—proceeds from a certain strange and ridiculous conception of truth, peculiar to many persons engaged in the great fields of our literary criticism and of our publishing and political activities.

This is a conception of truth not at all as something capable of irradiating any scene on the globe, like light; but as some very definite and limited force driving a band wagon. People who possess this conception of truth seem to argue very reasonably that if Mr. Wells is "in it," so to speak, with truth, and is saying "the thing" to say about sex or about the Liberal Party, then the intelligent author anywhere who

desires to be "in it" with truth will surely get into this band wagon of Mr. Wells' and stand on the very planks he has placed in the platform of its particular wagon bed. It is an ironical if tragic comment on the intelligence of American reading that the driver I have chanced to see most frequently urged for authors here should be Mr. H. G. Wells, who has done probably more than any other living writer of English to encourage varied, specialistic and non-partisan expression.

We have said that to tell his own truth the American writer will have to sit longer before his subject and will have more to do to express it than if he chose it from a country of more ancient practices in art, and of longer ancestral sojourns. We have said that he will be urged not to tell his own truth, considerably more than an English or German or French writer would be. These authors are at least not advised to imitate American expression; and they live in countries where the habit of copying the work of other artists is much less widely regarded as an evidence of sophistication than it is here.

The American writer must also face a marked historical peculiarity of our national letters.

The publishing centers of England and of Germany and of France are in the midst of these nations. Outside the daily press, the greater part of the publishing business of our own country is in New York—situated in the northeast corner, nearly a continent away from many of our national interests and from many millions of our population. By an odd coincidence, outside the daily press, the field of our national letters in magazine and book publication seems to be occupied not at all with individual impressions of truth from over the whole country, but with what may be called the New York truth.

The young American author in the Klondike who desires to sit long before his subject and to reveal its hitherto unrecorded aspects, must do so with the clear knowledge that the field of publication for him in the East is already filled by our old friend the New York Klondike, scarcely changed by the disappearance of one dog or sweater, from the early days of the gold discoveries.

One can understand how the Klondike or the Californian writer, interested in expressing some hitherto unrecorded aspect of creation seen in "the way that he alone can see it" might feel a

trifle dashed by New York's way of showing her love of originality in letters by spending nearly all the money and energy her publishers and reviewers have in advertising and in praising authors as the sixteenth Kipling of the Klondike, or the thirtieth O. Henry of California. This is apt to be bewildering, too, for the readers of Mr. Kipling and of O. Henry who have enjoyed in the tales of each of these men the truth told "with the part of him which makes him This man and not That."

These are some of my own guesses as to why individual impressions of our national life are few, and why they are not greatly in vogue in America. Whether they be poor or good guesses they represent one Middle Western reader's observation of some of the actual difficulties that will have to be faced in America by the writer who by temperament desires to follow that golden and beautiful way of Flaubert, which Mr. Galsworthy has mentioned.

This writer will doubtless get from these difficulties far more fun than he ever could have had without them. They are suggested here in the pages of *The Little Review* not at all with the idea of discouraging a single traveler from

setting out on that splendid road, but rather as a step towards the beginning of that true and long comradeship with effort that is worth befriending, which our felicitous English well-wisher hopes may be *The Little Review's* abiding purpose.

"Henceforth I ask not Good Fortune: I, myself, am Good Fortune."

ONCE UPON A TIME

When I was eight years old my father gave me a large, crimson book, "The Tales of Hans Christian Andersen." On turning the first page I opened the door of a pleasure destined to be lifelong—the pleasure of reading short stories. The very index glimmers with that light of rich variety which has remained an essential element of my enjoyment of a collection of excellent tales —"The Wild Swans," "What the Moon Saw," "Little Claus and Big Claus," "The Nightingale," "The Fellow Traveller," "Holger Danske." The title and the first sentences of the opening narrative betray a charm which has remained for me one of the most alluring characteristics of all revelative short stories.

THE WILD SWANS

"Far away from here, in the land that the swallows fly to when winter is coming, there lived a king who had eleven sons and a daughter named Eliza. The eleven brothers went to

school like princes as they were, with stars on their breasts, and sabres by their sides: they wrote on gold tablets with diamond pencils; and could say by heart as well as read from the book; one had only to hear them to know they were princes."

In those first words, "The Wild Swans"—"Far away from here in the land the swallows fly to," sings the tone of the born short-story-teller who always subconsciously knows that outside the scene of his description there are other places in creation. He will indeed not only subconsciously inform you that there are other places, but that about the local habitation of his story he has left much unsaid. It is more the novelist's business to give you a complete map of his undertaking, as entirely and delightfully as De Foe shows you every portion of *Crusoe's* stockade; and Thackeray in many-paged detail lets you know by a thousand witty pen-and-ink lines in the fictive background the full-peopled personnel of *Gandish's* Academy, down to the very character of *J. J.'s* signature.

Extremely different from the interest of the novel reader is the entertainment sought by the lover of short stories—an entertainment

attended constantly by the gleam of untraveled worlds. Impossible to read Bret Harte's fascinating "Brown of Calaveras" without perceiving how much is happening to all the other sparsely mentioned guests in the Wingdam House. Impossible to turn from "Deephaven" without regretting the unknown friends by chance left unvisited, and the keen desire of going back to spend at least one more afternoon with *Mrs. Kew* at the lighthouse, and seeing the shores of the island you never had time to look at. Although the phrase, "but that is another story," reveals the essential quality of a gifted craftsman of that art, its sense will generally have been implied without an overt word, at more than one turn of a brief tale well narrated. The reader will have been glancing all along at the occasional glimmer of something lost behind the ranges; and catching the light overtone of melodies unheard.

For expressing the multitudinous peoples and changes of a nomadic, a comparatively scattered civilization ranging over great extents of country, the collection of brief, episodic tales is an especially fortunate medium. Unnumbered generations have felt its profound suggestive charm

and rhythmic dignity in the pages of the Old Testament. Not to speak with irreverence, it may be said that doubtless for one person who is familiar with the Old Testament's expression of its immortal varieties of religious experience, there are ten who know its vivid human scenes; and while they might be at a loss to find a single text in support of either Calvinism or Catholicism they can relate throughout the story of Joseph and the coat of many colors; they have seen Rebekah at the well, and heard the voice of Ruth saying to Naomi, "Whither thou goest I will go."

To come to lesser, but distinguished examples, it was in the form of a collection of briefly narrated impressions, "A Sportsman's Sketches," that Turgenev first summoned from the vasty deep, for the fiction readers of Europe, the nation of Russia, and spoke to the world, as Henry James says, "with the voice of those vaguely-imagined multitudes whom we think of more and more today as waiting their turn in the arena of civilization in the gray expanses of the North." And through the medium of "Plain Tales from the Hills," and "Mine Own People," Kipling evoked from the blue Indian Ocean such a

magically realized and variously peopled India as had been before a land unknown to popular imagination.

It is, it may be fairly surmised, because we in America are a various and continental people of many national memories and traditions, and our civilization ranges over a vast extent of country, that our national fictive gift has been so largely expressed in short tales and sketches.

From nearly our first fiction—"Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legends of Sleepy Hollow"—to "Potash and Perlmutter" and the spellbinding Afro-American tales of "Ezekiel," innumerable conceptions and elements in our national life have been creatively expressed in American short stories—the grave and beautiful New England fatalism of Hawthorne's "Snow Image," the fantastic melancholy of "The Red Death" and "The Fall of the House of Usher," the world of Bret Harte's "Forty-Niners," the mean provincialism of small American cities so keenly portrayed in Stephen Crane's "The Monster" and "Whilomville Stories," the breath of the sea on the "Country of the Pointed Firs," "Uncle Remus," "Dooley," "Doc Horne," Myra Kelly's eager little Polish and Galician

school-children, the terrible death of the *Little Maid in the Door,* the charm of the too prodigal *Julia Bride* in Henry James's brilliant presentment—the list is too long to continue. Nearly all our novelists of talent and parts have given us admirable brief tales; and many American authors who write novels imperfectly vitalized, literal, and mechanical, compose excellent and revelative short stories.

Mr. Edward Garnett roused the winds of controversy not long since by remarking that it would be interesting to know whether America could show as long a list of able novel writers as he can muster for England. Neither America, one would suppose at a venture, nor any other country of the globe. "The novel of manners grows thick in England, and there are many reasons for it," says M. Taine. "In the first place it was born there. And a plant always flourishes best in its own country." Who will deny England's preëminent talent in this great form?

On the other hand, from reading the brief tales by English writers in the English periodicals, and the rather rare English volumes of short stories, the cursory surveyor of the last twenty years might fairly infer that with a few striking

exceptions, the form was not for the English temperament a very ready medium of fictive expression, or a means of presentment whose broad, poetic and conveying elements had been as keenly, as profoundly and spontaneously developed as in other countries, our own among them.

In the "Letters of John Chinaman," Mr. Lowes Dickinson has given us a description of the literary interests possessed by the readers and writers of China, which is especially significant for American readers. His words are addressed to all our western civilization, though more particularly to England. But they are especially of value, as will be seen, for the dwellers in a country like our own, professing a democratic ideal and necessarily concerned in the wide and sincere common understanding he tells us Chinese literary men regard as the great purpose of their calling.

"In China," says the essayist, "letters are respected not merely to a degree, but in a sense which must seem I think to you unintelligible and overstrained. But there is a reason for it. Our poets and literary men have taught their successors for long generations to look for good,

not in wealth, not in power, not in miscellaneous activity, but in a trained, a choice, an exquisite appreciation of the most simple and universal relations of life. To feel, and in order to feel, to express, or at least to understand the expression of all that is lovely in nature, of all that is poignant and sensitive in man is to us in itself a sufficient end. A rose in a moon-lit garden, the shadow of trees on the turf, almond bloom, scent of pine, the wine-cup and the guitar; these and the pathos of life and death, the long embrace, the hand stretched out in vain, the moment that glides forever away with its freight of music and light into the shadow and hush of the haunted past, all that we have, all that eludes us, a bird on the wing, a perfume escaped on the gale—to all these things we are trained to respond, and the response is what we call literature."

"To respond to all that we have—all that eludes us—." Here surely is a great and valid aim in national letters, a tonic recreation for their readers.

Undoubtedly a main reason for the humble though surely pervasive taste for short tales here is that this form gives us that beautiful

recreation on the simplest terms. Without long leisure, we are glad to sit down companionably in the evening for a little while, to hear the roadside and everyday adventures of other wayfarers. The short story taste is a lyric taste—for those who love to listen to the fugitive music of the broad run of common life in this homely manner.

HENRY JAMES

AN IMPRESSION

I

"NEVER say you know the last word of any human heart." It is the opening sentence of "Louisa Pallant." The beauty it expresses echoes in one's spirit long after one closes any novel by Henry James.

Alike from his greater and his lesser tales of fiction one turns away with a heightened desire of understanding mortal souls.

II

After twenty-five years of reading him, it is as a fiction writer first that one thinks of him. In thinking of him as a fiction writer, one looks back at an extraordinary variety of enriching recreation in his pages. Whatever that variety, this one striking experience has attended the pleasure of all my own acquaintance with them. From the first word to the last I have been eager to

learn the truth about his characters. What they did, what they suffered, their pains, their passions, their delights are very little to me in comparison with what they themselves are, their personalities.

One lives the life of Henry Fielding's and of Thomas Hardy's men and women, and of Turgenev's and of Mr. Howells' and Mr. H. G. Wells'. The character of the "human interest" for me, at least, in Henry James' novels is radically different in kind. The refreshment of reincarnation in other creatures is not a part of that interest. The fascination of the tale of *Milly Theale* and of *Nanda Brookenham,* and of *Chad Newsome* and *Strether* lies, not in one's imaginative embodiment in their natures, but in learning what essential stuff these natures are made of.

Tone by tone, qualification by qualification, behind one lifted curtain after another, the ways and motives of their inner spirits are revealed. The master of a great art, Henry James is so dazzling in performance that one instinctively regards the play of the fountain rather than its secret springs: and thinks of him as a supremely accomplished writer before one considers him

an author and a source of creative ideas. All he has written seems a part of literature.

Of an achievement so great, one can, in a brief account of a long enjoyment of his pages, give of course only a few indications of the ways in which his medium has seemed to one markedly expressive.

The prefaces of his last published edition of his fiction make, concerning the manner of each of these compositions, a comment necessarily so much more deeply derived than that of a mere reader, and even a frequent rereader, that nearly all subsequent words on the topic of his fictive production have an air of casual and of superficial consideration.

"Were I minded," he says in the preface to "The Awkward Age," in referring to one of its "books," "to use a 'loud word'—and the critic in general hates loud words as a man of taste may hate loud colors—I should speak of the composition of the chapter entitled 'Tishy Grendon' with all the pieces of the game on the table together and each unconfusedly and contributively placed, as triumphantly scientific."

The pleasure one has in witnessing his achievements in his later works is like watching a player

win a complicated game of solitaire. He proceeds to build up one series of impressions after another, with a species of science of art—since this word having once resounded may perhaps permissibly be echoed—which this particular reader chances never to have observed in the method of any other writer.

It is by chromatic shades and half-tones that many elements in the miracle of our whole mysterious existence reveal themselves to us: and in his mastery, indeed it may almost be said in his creation of a method of expression which proceeds by chromatic shades and half-tones and crescent qualifications, Henry James' genius is supreme. The infinite faculty of man, the kaleidoscopic character of the human mind, glimmer richly from the distinguished presence of "The Awkward Age," "The Wings of the Dove," "The Ambassadors." The curiousness of life, the enigma of its intricacy, is always there to fascinate you, as you are fascinated by prodigies of nature, the seamed face of the Matterhorn, or the roofs of stalactite caves. At once the most original and the most conventional of authors, he never repeats his knowledge.

To name the array of Henry James' novels

and briefer tales is to call up a whole diversified globe of persons. "A London Life," "The Bostonian," "The Two Magics," "The Princess Casimassima," "The Europeans," "The Ambassadors," "The Figure in the Carpet"—the very run of titles of his nearly half a hundred works indicates somehow the writer's passion for a thickly peopled, a cosmopolitan, a highly complicated scene. Nearly all these works are as filled and crowded with human beings as medieval paintings of Bibical events. These swarming persons are each as real as possible, from *Ida* with her wonderful billiard reach in "What Maisie Knew," to the unnamable spiritual grace of *Ralph Touchett.*

It is a signal instance of the quality of the novelist's mastery that, vividly distinct as the persons of his peopled world are, they speak alike. In the same way the persons of Spenser's "Faerie Queene" speak alike. The texture of Henry James' expression has a wonderfully consistent surface. His dialogue is all of this texture. It is almost as difficult to break pieces out to quote, as it would be to quote a portion of a tapestry. You can not characterize a figure by one of his remarks, as you can with Daudet's and

Thackeray's. The miracle is that, conditioned as the conversation of Henry James' people is by this uniformity in the warp and woof of their speech, it yet represents, at once so fully and so delicately, innumerable differences of nature. Outward peculiarities of personal speech and of personal appearance are of course only too often concealments, rather than affirmations, of a personal spirit. Someone said once of a brilliant physician who was blind, "He has a chance really to know what people's souls are like. He is not distracted by their appearances." The blurring of distinctions of individual speech in Henry James' art of composition serves in this same manner, by eliminating a distraction, to show intimate motives more clearly than a presentment truer to the facts of existence.

Then—though *Milly Theale* and *Kate Croy* speak according to the texture of the book in which they appear, rather than according to their own several natural histories—they narrate themselves to us, after all, as people narrate the qualities of their souls to us in real life. This most precious learning which earth has to bestow, we acquire, not by witnessing some signal act of courage, or staunchness, or wisdom,

but by a long and multitudinous series of changing and corrected impressions.

III

Henry James, alone—so far as I know—among novelists, has had a cosmopolitan purpose. No other human being, I think, has exhibited, as a writer, so clear and so frequent an intent of understanding and portraying men and women of other nationalities than his own. For this intent, too, his method has proved to be a miraculous instrument. Without at any time speaking any such tongue as, let us say, the French-English of Thackeray's *Florac,* his medium serves as a species of Volapuk for presenting a peopled world inhabited by French and Italians and Germans and Americans and English. Those who feel that he has disparaged Americans would do well to consider their extremely noble appearance among these figures in his pages.

His tale is always told in the tone of the world-traveler: and makes a world-traveler of its reader. Never has such a faculty seemed more valuable to letters than at the present moment. Its presence dignifies all his efforts.

The scenes his people inhabit are produced for you as by a master of the revels of the globe. You see the enriching spectacles that have delighted hundreds of thousands of human beings of all climes and nations. The mellow light, the vast human heritage of the pleasures of countless summers and winters of passionate pilgrims, rest on a hundred places where one has sojourned in his tales. Yet, lovely as his evocations are, they remain almost purely spectacular. If when you visit these scenes you look upon cities of men, manners, and climates, Ulysses never shows you anything of councils and governments, of any currents of collective human purpose circulating in the lands where he guides you. His world-pageant is unrolled for you by an author whose interest is cosmopolitan, but not international.

It seems almost an ungrateful discrimination to make about a writer whose production has, as a whole, illumined the world for his readers more than the effort of any other author. But truth seems to require such an acknowledgement all the more because in this wonderful illumination he is peerless. No Elizabethan, nor Grecian, not the text of Holy Writ, reveals that special

widespread candid light it was his destiny to show us. No other writer has expressed as he has the profound and large charm of our human opportunity simply as inhabitants of a globe. Yet, beautifully as the outward aspect, wonderfully as the individual souls of any nation whose scene and people are present in Henry James' fiction are portrayed, these are never related, in my experience of his pages, to any general social consciousness, to any of the contemporary notions and ideas rising from that silent spirit of collective masses which Renan tells us is the source of all great things.

Almost all his figures lead lives fully peopled, fully sociable in the sense of being constantly in communication with other individuals, but not in any large sense social, nor touched by any of the moods of a profound general consciousness. The wide, the fascinating currents of contemporary thought seem never to wash the shores of those lands where they lead their convincing fabled existence, in one way so much in the world of today, and yet, in another way, not in it at all. Justice and injustice by no means wait outside this widespread world of Henry James' creation. But his reference, his people's

reference, to justice and injustice is always personal, and never swings to a broader range.

IV

Everybody who has read Henry James' novels and tales for the last twenty-five years has probably realized that, with a few notable exceptions, no matter who the hero or the heroine may be or what the conditions of their existence, this character—who has been, from the beginning, making up his mind whether he will or will not support the frame of things as they are—will conform. He will support the frame of things as they are, even if, like *Hyacinth Robinson,* he has to commit suicide to do it.

Why do they all acquiesce? Why does *Maggie Verver* go back to, or rather never depart from, her treacherous and gross husband? Why does *Madame de Mauves* submit to her perhaps less treacherous and more gross companion? Why does *Isabelle Archer* return to *her* base husband? Why, when the character of his behest seems to her unwarrantable and even contemptible, does she advise her step-daughter to sacrifice all her dearest instincts to obey it? Why does *the American* act according to the

wish of the murderous brother and mother of *Madame de Cintre?* Useless to multiply instances. They all acquiesce, of course, for very different reasons. But it is never, so far as I recall—except in the case of *Merton Densher*—from an imputed infirmity of purpose. It must be remembered that not one of the protagonists mentioned is described as at all weak-willed, or of dependent nature. On the contrary, they are all represented as rather strong-willed and of independent nature. But in every case, fretted through a long period of doubt, they are at last played on. However rotten things are in the state of Denmark, they never kill the king. This striking feature—the determination to let things remain as they are in the state of Denmark—is almost as invariable a feature of Henry James' composition as dark tree trunks before a misted horizon is of Corot's.

What is remarkable is not so much the acquiescence itself as the fact that the artist almost always treats it as an act of high courage and vision. It is a little as though—to indicate this treatment in its least convincing aspect—Chaucer should be at a great deal of pains, in telling the story of "Patient Griselda," to make

you believe that *Griselda* is not so much subservient as spirited.

Someone has said of Turgenev's novels that, as in Whitman's poem, after all the heroes are discouraged and gone, liberty is the last to go out. In Henry James' novels, the spirit that remains after all their heroes and heroines are gone is the spirit of the conventional. The word is not used here in its narrower sense, but in that grave meaning *Isabel Archer* considers in her long meditation—the meaning of "the love of harmony and order and decency and all the stately offices of life."

Like chromosomes which are apparent only in their susceptibility to a certain stain, the manifestations of life which were most vivid to Henry James' mind were those, I believe, which could take the dye of the traditional, of the conventional; other manifestations were almost nonexistent for him. He could not, I think, have seen his heroes and heroines doing things inharmonious and indecorous: as soon as they began they would have become ridiculous, and then dim, and then have vanished.

V

Far more apparent in the criticism of Henry James than in his fiction is his color-blindness to manifestations of life not susceptible to traditional and conventional dyes. A critical perception rather derisive of the emergent genius of Ibsen and of Whistler and of Whitman, and that asks what the interest is in the novels of Arnold Bennett and of H. G. Wells, shows, I think one is forced to admit, a very striking limitation of vision. The rising realization of the error and irrationality of the present economic order, the present social order; the growing knowledge of the overwhelming extent of poverty on earth; the study of numberless causes and effects of that poverty, and of meliorative efforts against it: these vital concerns have absorbed much of the most intense, most uncompromising, most creative and characteristic thought of our time. The fact that all this range of thought seems to remain outside the realm of the criticism of Henry James, just as it remains outside his fiction, with all else which does not show the colors or the grace of conventional things, seriously narrows his appreciation of much vivid truth and beauty.

When that is said, he yet remains a great, an imaginative critic both of society and of letters. There is not space here to comment on his scope and brilliancy in this field, nor to mention more than one of his extraordinary values. In that delightful book, "Partial Portraits," in his wonderful essay on Turgenev, he tells us that the Russian author was "absolutely without that eagerness of self-reference which sometimes accompanies great and even small reputations," and he quotes the eloquent words of the elegy of Renan—"Turgenev received, by that mysterious decree which marks out human vocations, the gift which is noble beyond all others; he was born essentially impersonal." This fine tribute might fittingly have been paid to Henry James himself. The grace of that fresh and inspiring gift permeates all his words on letters.

Our own land is filled with a squalor of personal reference. The tone of Henry James' criticism alone is a clarifying pleasure in the midst of it, like a salt breath of the air of the seas that reach around the earth, blowing into some close apartment in a dwelling on their shores.

The work of a great writer, and a voluminous

writer, must always say very different things to different persons. As in every other long acquaintanceship, one is always finding a disparaging criticism which refers accurately to one period and instance of a very large phenomenon not applicable to it as a whole. For many reasons there will probably long be numbers of American readers to whom no aspect of Henry James' work will say anything at all. People here have formed a habit of passing their eyes hastily over vast acreages of text dully apprehended. They are abundantly provided with reading matter which they can follow with half their mind on other matters, or even half asleep. A restless inattention pervades our national habits of thought. To enjoy Henry James requires the reader's attention. Then—he is accomplished and exhaustive and profound and critical, and we prefer authors to be ignorant and casual and obvious and flattering; and not even in an appreciation of letters are we able to assume the gift which is noble beyond all others, of being essentially impersonal.

VI

Henry James' criticisms of America are far less contemptuous, and perhaps less penetrating, than Thoreau's criticisms which Americans receive so unresentfully: more candid, and more wise, than Heine's ironies on the subject of Germany, which his countrymen seem to love to crush against their bosoms. As a protest against his country's lack of principle, Thoreau refused to support its government by refusing to pay his taxes. As an avowed defiance of his nation's philistinism, Heine left Germany in his thirty-fourth year, to live in France. Remaining there until his death, some twenty-five years afterwards, he asked in his will, near the close of that long martyrdom of pain he bore so bravely in the Valley of the Shadow, that his ashes be buried in Paris.

All apart from the consideration of the justice of the view of the soldier in the liberation war of humanity, all apart from the question of one's own belief in the cause Thoreau espoused, there is something that rouses admiration in the acts of both these men of genius. Their conduct betokens a large inner life such as everyone must

honor, where ideas are the abiding realities. It chances that the sympathy of the present writer is with that "sober-suited freedom," of which Mr. Howells spoke so beautifully not long since as the instinctive sympathy of our own national heritage. But irrespective of one's national sympathies, when Henry James became, in her hour of struggle, a subject of the country where he had lived and worked for the last forty years, there was in the same manner, I think, a quality in the act that everyone must honor, except those people in any and every country for whom patriotism means simply a violent and assertive claimancy and a hatred of alien nations.

No written words have, I suppose, better served the cause of civilization against that stupid and tragic error of hatred among nations than the life-work of Henry James.

SOME UNPOPULAR PARODIES

I

"A MAN cannot indulge in a sham joke because it is the ruin of a joke to be unintelligible," says Chesterton in "Pope and the Art of Satire." "A man may pretend to be a poet: he can no more pretend to be a wit than he can pretend to bring rabbits out of a hat without having learnt to be a conjurer."

The distinction may be applied to the art of parody. A man cannot pretend to be a parodist. Undoubtedly the leading reason for the infrequency of parody in America is the enormous prestige of buncombe in literary criticism throughout our land.

When one observes the vogue of a critic like James Huneker, so deeply and at times too modestly trusting year in and year out that nobody will purchase and read the works he discusses; and notes Mr. Shan Bullock's recent approval of something he calls Mrs. Wharton's "City of Mirth," one can understand in a way why par-

ody is not regarded here as a natural element of literary criticism.

The truth is that the social view of criticism is abhorrent to our customs. Few of the persons engaged in this great field in our country can tolerate the thought that what they say—or what anyone else says—is addressed to the appreciation of peers. Many of our writers of criticism display a positive genius in administering the rapid blight of the explanatory touch. I remember a recent magazine article called "Whistler," with a thoughtful subdivision entitled "His Fine Taste in Painting."

Mr. John Galsworthy hardly presents an idea in our periodical publications but that someone rushes in front of him to express it for him, in the magazine's own kind way, in larger print, and in words of one syllable, and to tell the readers the point, climax and end of the performance, just at the head of the author's story, before he begins.

II

Some of the best parodies I know are to be found in Chesterton's vividly but not abjectly admiring monograph on Browning. Perhaps

indeed an abject admirer—one who is prone from his own emotion and cannot take a clear look at the object of his worship—never really admires the object, but only his own egotistic conception, and is preoccupied not so much by the qualities of his idol as by his absorption in his own emotions. Opposed as Americans are to the appreciation of the real, we waste a great deal of pity on persons disappointed by the fall of idols, who are merely surrounded by the shards of something they have blundered against from a dreary habit of introspective abstraction and purblind failure to regard the facts of nature.

Such persons are always being disappointed in Henry James because he is not more like Colonel Roosevelt, and then being disappointed in Colonel Roosevelt because he is not more like Henry James. To persons of this vision none may hope to stand on his merits. Individual variety is not for them. If variety is not, neither is irony, and certainly not parody with its genial exposition of mental queerness.

Chesterton, for his part, instead of complacently pitying himself for finding Browning's expression not so lucid as Herrick's, remarks

with penetration that the reason why Browning's presentment is difficult for most persons is not because of the poet's love of abstraction, as is commonly supposed, but because his description is unusually rapid and specific.

If Browning, he says, were to describe the scene and act of a man's being knocked downstairs by another man to whom he had given the lie, the poet's description would run:

"What then?" "You lie!" And doormat below stairs
Takes bump from back."

The attention of those who believe brevity and the Direct Image to be the most essential qualities of poetry is called to this little known and concise poem.

Also the attention of those who do not know Whitman wrote rhythmic verse is called to a little known parody by Bayard Taylor, printed in the charming pages of "The Echo Club." A Philadelphia acquaintance of Whitman once told me that the learned prosodist, Dr. Greenough, had remarked to him that he could scan everything in "Leaves of Grass" except one line:

"The lobster pots on the coasts of New Jersey."

None the less the superstition that Whitman wrote non-metrically prevails. As usual the parodist is more accurately informed and says of Whitman that he enjoys his decameters and hecameters. Certainly no one who failed to enjoy them could have written "Camerades."

Everywhere, everywhere, following me;
Taking me by the buttonhole, pulling off my boots, hustling me with the elbows:
Sitting down with me to clams and the chowder kettle:
Plunging naked at my side into the sleek irascible surges;
Soothing me with the strain that I neither permit nor prohibit;
Flocking this way and that, reverent, eager, orotund, irrepressible:
Denser than sycamore leaves when the North winds are scouring Paumonok:
What can I do to restrain them? Nothing, verily nothing.
Everywhere, everywhere crying aloud to me;
Crying, I hear; and I satisfy them out of my nature:
And he that comes at the end of the feast shall find something left over.
Whatever they want I give; though it be something else, they shall have it.
Drunkard, leper, Tammanyite, smallpox and cholera patient, shoddy and codfish millionaire,
And the beautiful young men and the beautiful young women all the same.

Crowding hundreds of thousands, cosmical multitudes,
Buss me and hang on my hips and lean up to my shoulders,
Everywhere listening to my yawp: and glad whenever they hear it:
Everywhere saying, Say it, Walt, we believe it:
Everywhere, everywhere.

Among the imaginary, "typical critics" whose parodies compose "The Echo Club" the most striking is perhaps The Gannet. His efforts we are told "represent brilliancy without literary principle, the love of technical effect, regardless of the intellectual conception of a work."

It is interesting to observe that of all these composers of forty years ago The Gannet most often hits off absurdities prevalent in contemporary letters. This, I believe, is not because original unregeneracy impels one to an especial sympathy with "brilliancy without literary principle" but because The Gannet likes, as he says, "to exaggerate exaggeration": and since his day exaggeration has had an increasing vogue from the tendency of American publication to run into the ground every element in existence it may present.

To give a hasty and crude outline of some of

our leading national customs and provisions for bookbuyers, it may be said that for years our publishing houses will issue books about wild animal life, books good, bad and indifferent, without regard to quality, until the reading public from the loathing of satiety practically boycotts any work mentioning a dumb beast. Then for years the publishing houses all issue historical romances, good, bad and indifferent, without regard to quality, until this cannot be endured any longer and the public exhibits a well justified movement towards cat-calling and ridicule at the appearance of a helmet's tip. Then for years the publishing houses all issue novels, good, bad and indifferent for their automobiling interest; then for their working girl interest; then for their sex interest; and with one topic after another this tune is repeated indefinitely for the attentive readers of our land.

Nevertheless, however crass and feeble in art and expression, from another aspect the phenomenon of American topical publication might offer a valuable human contribution if it displayed a genuine keenness for the topic presented—a genuine and searching interest in actual wild animal life, in a scholarly knowledge

of history, in sincere and contributive manifestations of romance, in the pleasures and difficulties of automobiling, in real and ascertained industrial conditions, in clear truth about sex—or in clear and contributive truth about anything.

Unfortunately, the enormous bulk of topical publication is purely imitative, book derived, and faked. It represents no explorational verve. It represents the national characteristic which produces "Uncle Tom's Cabin" with two *Topsys* and two *Evas.*

Repetition in a hundred forms overruns American publication. "my dear mr. hall," an author with an irrepressible love of parody once wrote to a New York editor, "in your october E'bodys' i read a story in which i noticed some sentences as follows: "i dont keer whether you are any good or not" she cried. "You're alive! You're alive! You're alive! You're alive! You're alive! You're alive! You're alive! You're alive!" I thought she would never stop saying it, on and on and on and on and on and on and on. "You're alive! You're alive! You're alive! You're alive! You're alive! You're alive! You're alive!"

"Say, bill do you get this at a rate, or does every word go? i want to know, because if the latter is right i'm going to interduce in my compositions some histerical personages that will loom up large as repeeters when the words are counted up at the polls.

"Yours truly,

"O. HENRY."

III

Purely social and communicative parody not only thwarts the American passion for explanation but runs counter to our established principles of criticism. It presupposes a kindred enjoyment of critical discriminations concerning an author's whole creative contribution, his style, his general ideas, his outlook upon the surrounding facts of the contemporary universe. Thus it is totally at variance with our prevalent, practical, almost penal conception of criticism as a species of convenient, bare receptacle, an empty warehouse for the storage of innumerable publications for the button molder.

A gifted and successful editor once summed up this conception of literary criticism, in my hearing, in a very clear, though unconscious

manner, so pertinent, that it is well worth recording.

"Ideas," he said, "are out of place in a literary department. So is all reference to current events, of course. A literary department is for books."

His view of letters as unrelated to either ideas or facts or to anything but the great American industry of book production was recalled to me by the brilliant parodies of criticism presented by H. G. Wells in "Boon, the Mind of the Race, the Wild Asses of the Devil, and the Last Trump."

The portion I chanced to enjoy most in a work delightful throughout is the section describing the world conference of authors, as imagined by the penetrating irony of *George Boon,* and his loose notes on a fancied lecture to be read at the world conference.

"The discouragement of the young a social necessity in all early societies—Dead dogs better than living lions.

"Virgil as an early instance of a great man of set intentions. Deliberately put up as the Latin Homer. Victorian Age sets up as a rival to the Augustine. Selection of Great Men in every

Department. The great Victorian painters. Sir Frederic Leighton compared with Titian and Michael Angelo. Tennyson as Virgil. Lord Tennyson at the crest of the Victorian greatness wave. His hair. His cloak. His noble bearing. His aloofness. His great pipe. His price per word. His intellectual familiarities with Queen Victoria."

The take-off of a whole American cast of thought induced by the enormous audiences of the women's magazines, typified by a symbolic figure called "Aunt Dove" "with an ideal of refinement of the most negative description," has a wonderful precision for American sufferers.

As for an American ideal of refinement which is not negative—among the loose notes of *Boon* is an inimitable parody of Henry James, beginning:

"At times it seemed inaccessible, a thing beyond hope, beyond beginning, and then at times it became so concrete an imagination, a desire so specific, so nearly expressed, as to grow if not to the exact particulars of longitude and latitude, yet at any rate so far as county and district and atmosphere were concerned, so far indeed an

intimation that made it seem at last at certain moments as if it could not possibly be very much further than just around the corner or over the crest."

"The gist," says *George Boon*, "is that *Mr. Blandish* wants a house to live in, and that he has an idea of the kind of house he wants.

"Have you ever read the critical articles of Edgar Allan Poe? They're very remarkable. He is always demanding an American literature. It is like a deserted baby left to die in its cradle, weeping and wailing for its bottle. What he wanted, of course, was honest and intelligent criticism."

IV

"Honest and intelligent criticism." You read the words with a certain pain: and realize how very little America desires any such manifestation. She wishes to adore the work of contributive authors, without discrimination, or to detest it, or to neglect it, equally without discrimination. But to know a force in letters for what it is, to feel its power, and be conscious of its weakness, to be able to laugh at its faults without contempt, to understand creative expres-

sion and live with it as with any other human value—this is distant, indeed, from her conception of the function of criticism.

Our critics must regard an author's achievement as flawless or else be supposed to have "attacked" him. If so much as a fallacy of method or reason be pointed out, those with a passion for judgment assert that the whole body of a writer's work is henceforth valueless to them. "That is enough to know about *him.*" "I have seen through *her!*" With a sense of shock you feel that the fire of truth has suddenly gone out in the ashes. But parody, the flicker of that flame, cannot exist without that fire. Whoever likes to watch its leaping will have learned to look at both letters and life in a warmer and larger light.

A NATIONAL CONTRIBUTION

On a wet December evening, after everybody else had gone to bed, I once picked up a book and began to read. The whole house was still. I was dissatisfied with my thoughts not only on myself but "on man, on nature, and on human life"—too dissatisfied either to face the difficulties that distressed me, or to dismiss them.

I read for two hours a familiar novel of Mr. William Dean Howells, "The Son of Royal Langbrith." This is the page at which I began:

". . . the doctor asked, 'What do you think of the man who takes the life of another's soul—destroys his soul? It was a woman's expression.'

"The Judge smiled intelligently. 'I should imagine. But I should doubt whether it could be done. Do you want to engage me for the defense?' "

For the rest of the two hours, I lived the days

of *Dr. Anther* in the town of Saxmills. I lived the tissue of the existence of *Hawberk,* the opium victim, whose soul was being destroyed, and of his daughter who comforted his nightmares, and of all the men and women there whose fates were still affected by the evil exploitations of *Royal Langbrith,* now long dead.

As *Hawberk* I struggled gradually to recovery. I sat with *Dr. Anther* in his office and talked to him of *Langbrith,* my dead enemy.

" 'I've seen the time when I wanted to go into the cemetery and dig him up and burn him, but I don't know as I do now. What do you say, Doct' Anther? Let by-gones be by-gones, as the fellow said about his old debts when he started in to make new ones? Still it does gravel me . . .' "

Our library lamp had begun to go out. I was myself again. As it winked and gulped and I blew it out to darkness, I could see that upstairs they had thoughtfully left the hall gas burning for me: and that, since it was late, and they would probably wake up when I put it out, I ought to go to bed. I went, filled with the thought of the wonder of the actual world and the adventures of its myriad souls, souls so

magnificent, so funny, so tragic, so miraculous, each in his own way on his journey unlike that of any other soul.

I had known before that "life like a dome of many-colored glass stains the white radiance of eternity." But I had forgotten it, until the repose and charm of a work of art revealed the truth to me. Now that the multitudinous, differentiations of life had been suggested to me, I was able to look as through a crystal at my difficulties. Whatever they had been, I could have looked at them with a clearer mind, and as after a clarifying recreation.

II

It is for this I read fiction—for its imaginative realization of life, for its creative power. A book is no better to me than a dungeon, a party telephone, or any other formal accepted method of preventing genuine, human intercourse, unless I can live freely in its pages, unless I can emerge from the convincing truth of its world, back into my own ways, as from some sparkling sea-change into something rich and strange.

I turn to fiction to be metamorphosed, and

literally for my re-creation. Of course I know there are other ways of reading novels.

Who shall meet them at these altars—who shall light
them to that shrine?
Velvet-footed who shall guide them to the goal?
Unto each his voice and vision, unto each his spoor
and sign—

People read novels as differently as they dance and dress and eat. Many, far from liking a thorough metamorphosis, feel a species of alarm before a work of fiction unless it has the quality of unreality. These readers prefer in a novel some rather violent presentment of which they are to be reassured as to its illusory character. They are with superficial, but without essential, difference the immemorial audience of Shakspere's humorous outline, who must be continually told that the stage lion is really *Snug* the joiner, and that the composition truly is child's play.

Others enjoy in the art of fiction only the reproduction of certain conventional literary effects. Their pleasure in reading is not in walking into the picture, but in looking to see whether it repeats some pattern they had delighted in before.

I love to walk into the picture. I love to read "dreaming true." I love to read myself awake in fresh fields and pastures new and to walk through them, letting down the bars on one unknown incarnation of existence after another. I wish a novel to maintain the old connotation of its name and, far from painting again a conventional and twice-told or hundred-times-told composition, to give me a *Weltanschauung* which is new. I ask of a novelist not that he should convince me of the un-lifelikeness of his fable, nor that he should repeat a pattern in writing, but that he should add an authoritative and original design, should evoke for the world his own peculiar and fresh impression of life—that he should contribute.

The genius of Mr. Howells contributes a great gallery of these impressions, an exhibition of social story heretofore untold, of country and city scenes, of human souls and characters in a variety and scope, which makes them, for readers who have the passion for "dreaming true," a constant admiration, a beloved enjoyment, and what can only be described as a solid satisfaction.

Mark Twain says of him:

"For forty years his English has been to me a continual delight and astonishment. In the sustained exhibition of certain qualities—clearness, compression, verbal exactness, and unforced and seemingly unconscious felicity of phrasing—he is, in my belief, without his peer in the English-writing world. *Sustained*—I entrench myself behind that protecting word. There are others who exhibit these great qualities as greatly as does he, but only by intervalled distributions of rich moonlight with stretches of veiled and dimmer landscape between: whereas Howells' moon sails cloudless skies all night, and all the nights."

In the same essay Mark Twain describes one of Mr. Howells' felicitous methods of realizing a human scene to his reader so aptly that quotation from his appreciation is imperative:

"There is another thing which is contentingly noticeable in Mr. Howells' books. That is to say his 'stage directions.' . . . Some authors overdo the stage directions. . . . Other authors . . . have nothing in stock but a cigar, a laugh, a blush, and a bursting into tears. . . . They say:

" '. . . replied Alfred, flipping the ash from his cigar.' (This explains nothing; it only wastes space.)

"'. . . responded Richard with a laugh.' (There is nothing to laugh at, there never is. The writer puts it in from force of habit—automatically; he is paying no attention to his work or he would see there is nothing to laugh at.)

"'. . . murmured Gladys, blushing.' (This poor old shopworn blush is a tiresome thing. We get so we would rather Gladys would fall out of the book and break her neck than do it again. . . . In a little while we hate her, just as we do Richard. . . . But I am friendly to Mr. Howells' stage directions, more friendly than to anyone's else, I think. They are done with a competent and discriminating art, are faithful to the requirements of a stage-direction's proper and lawful office which is to inform. Sometimes they convey a scene and its conditions so well that I believe I could see the scene and get the spirit and meaning of the accompanying dialogue if some one would read merely the stage directions to me and leave out all the talk. For instance, a scene like this, from 'The Undiscovered Country':

"'—And she laid her arms with a beseeching gesture on her father's shoulder.'

"'—she answered, following his gesture, with a glance.'

"'—she said, laughing nervously.'

"'—she asked, turning swiftly upon him that strange, searching glance.'

"'—she reluctantly admitted.'

"'But her voice died wearily away, and she stood looking into his face with puzzled entreaty.'

"Mr. Howells does not repeat his forms, and does not need to: he can invent fresh ones without limit."

Innumerable authors can call spirits from the vasty deep of American life without ever making them come. Doubtless it is because he uses the right words to bring them that they answer Mr. Howells' summons in such numbers and variety —judges and traveling-men and lawyers and doctors and dressmakers and spiritualists and society leaders and farmers and cabin boys and playwrights and inventors and agitators and convicts and clubmen and millionaires and boarding-house keepers and journalists and Shakeresses—men and women and children of all sorts and conditions.

They rise before you with the delicacy and the

right individuality of human friends. The society women are not social strugglers, bound up in the possession of their poodles and tiaras, but the sensible and distinguished *Mrs. Bowen* of Italian-American consular circles, and the humorous, limited and graceful *Nannie Corey* of Boston. The dressmakers can speak in natural accents, and without pins in their mouths: and you can like them and love them and look forward with delight to spending the afternoon with them. The former old farmer, *Deacon Latham*, talks to you, not of crops but of whether his granddaughter is going to be homesick with her aunt in Venice. The clubmen are visible at instants when they are not tipping the waiter. You know one of them, *Mr. Otis Binning*, for instance, an elderly bachelor, far better than as though you had seen him hailing cabs and tipping waiters interminably, by one paragraph of a letter of his, written to a relative in Boston, after he has been in New York two months.

"The literary superstition concerning us elderly fellows is (or used to be in the good old Thackeray times) that we are always thinking of our first loves, and are going about rather

droopingly on account of them. My own experience is that we are doing nothing of the kind. We are the only cheerful people in the world, and so long as we keep single, we are impartially impassioned of almost every interesting type of woman we meet. I find the greatest pleasure in bestowing my affections right and left, and I enjoy a delightful surprise in finding them hold out in spite of my lavish use of them. If I totted up the number of my loves, young and old, since I came here early in December, Leperello's list would be nothing to it."

Mr. Howells' millionaires and agitators are men besides being millionaires and agitators. The vivid and moving tale of *Dryfoos* the speculator and owner of the land where natural gas wells are discovered, the portrait of *Silas Lapham* against the riches of his mineral-paint industry are of the profoundest force and wisdom of Mr. Howells' art. They are absolute. Of the same quality is the tragic figure of *Lindau* —the veteran German-American Socialist and translator, who has lost his hand in the Civil War. Here is this "agitator" as *Basil March,* now his editor, sees him, in paying a visit to his old and beloved teacher in a New York tenement.

"March pushed the door open into a room like that on the left, but with a writing-desk instead of a cobbler's bench, and a bed, where Lindau sat propped up with a coat over his shoulders and a skull-cap on his head, reading a book, from which he lifted his eyes to stare blankly over his spectacles at March. His hairy old breast showed through his nightshirt which gaped apart: the stump of his left arm lay upon the book to keep it open.

" 'Ah, my tear y'ong friendt! Passil! Marge! Iss it you?' he called out joyously the next moment.

" 'Why, are you sick, Lindau?' March anxiously scanned his face, in taking his hand.

". . . 'No. I'm all righdt.' . . ."

As if he saw some appeal for greater frankness in *March's* eye he went on. " 'I tidn't gome here begause I was too boor to lif anywhere else, and I ton't stay in pedt begause I couldn't haf a fire to keep warm if I wanted it. I'm nodt zo bad off as Marmontel when he went to Paris. I'm a lidtle loaxurious, that is all. If I stay in pedt it's zo I can fling money away on somethings else. Heigh?'

" 'But what *are* you living here for, Lindau?'

March smiled at the irony lurking in Lindau's words.

"'Well, you zee, I foundt I was begoming a lidtle too moch of an aristograt. I had't a room oap in Greenvidge Willage among dose pig pugs over on the West Side, and I foundt'—Lindau's voice lost its jesting quality, and his face darkened—'that I was beginning to forget the boor!'

"'I should have thought,' said March, with impartial interest, 'that you might have seen poverty enough now and then in Greenwich Village to remind you of its existence.'

"'Nodt like here,' said Lindau. 'Andt you must zee it all the dtime—zee it, hear it, smell it, dtaste it—or you forget it. That is what I gome here for. I was begoming a ploated aristograt. I thought I was nodt like these beple down here, when I gome down once to look aroundt; I thought I must be somethings else, and zo I zaid I better take myself in time, and I gome here among my brothers—the beccars and the thiefs!' A noise made itself heard in the next room, as if the door were furtively opened, and a faint sound of tiptoeing, and of hands clawing on a table. 'Thiefs!' Lindau repeated,

with a shout. 'Lidtle thiefs that gabture your breakfast. Ah! Ha! Ha!' A wild scurrying of feet, joyous cries and tittering and a slamming door followed upon his explosion, and he resumed in the silence: 'Idt is the children cot pack from school. They gome out and steal what I leaf there on my daple. Idt's one of our lidtle chokes; we understand each other.' ''

Among all his portraits none is more arresting than Mr. Howells' presentations of speculative American natures—*Dr. Boynton, Fulkerson, Colville, Mr. Waters, Wanhope, Hewson, March* —perhaps there is a touch of the love of speculation in all his American men. Indeed, it sometimes seems as though the passion for speculation, whether exemplified by men shouting in the pit, in the Board of Trade, or by the tendency to say "I guess," or by William James' "Will to Believe," or San Francisco's generous determination to give Ruef a chance in civic life after his prison term, were characteristic of almost all kinds of American men—their most deep-seated, national characteristic, and producing at once their meanest acts and their greatest. The trait is wonderfully revealed in "The Quality of Mercy," "The Son of Royal Langbrith," "The

Undiscovered Country,'' ''A Hazard of New Fortunes.'' Sometimes it is indicated with the perfection of irony.

'' 'It may be,' said Mr. Waters, with a carefulness to do justice to assassination which made Colville smile, 'that the modern scientific spirit may be able to evolve something useful from the principle (of assassination), but considering the enormous abuses and perversions to which it is liable, I am very doubtful of it—very doubtful.'

'' ' . . . Don't you think the modern scientific spirit could evolve something useful out of the old classic idea of suicide?'

'' 'Perhaps,' said Mr. Waters. 'I haven't yet thought it over. The worst thing about suicide —and this must always rank it below political assassination—is that its interest is purely personal.' ''

Sometimes the passion for speculation is conveyed with an ineffable emotion and beauty that lie too deep for tears, as in the death of *Dr. Boynton.*

Again, the charm of a fancied plan for the sake of the glamour of chance is perfectly evoked, as it shines in a boy's heart, in ''The Flight of Pony Baker''—told with a warmth, a funniness,

a justice to the soul of a child, which make you feel that every boy on earth needs to be understood as delicately as Howells understands *Pony Baker,* and ought to be as responsibly cherished.

In general I believe that cosmopolitanism and international understanding is served better by the novelist who discovers to the world the natures of his own countrymen as they develop in their own land, than by the novelist who contributes his guess about the inhabitants of other countries. Of course, Mr. Henry James' distinguished genius in surmise, his reverence and absoluteness in "making out" the texture of the spirits of the men and women of other countries, as well as of his own, are a complete exception. His endowment and career in this kind are not only supreme and peerless. I think they are unique. Thackeray's *Florac,* and Mr. Howells' *Lindau,* and his wonderful delineation of an Austrian officer in "A Fearful Responsibility," Mr. Galsworthy's *Louis Ferrand* and Arnold Bennett's French aëronaut in "The Old Wives' Tale," all seem compact of essential truth. One can call to mind many a solitary figure and even group, in literature, created and presented with verity by

a novelist of an alien nation. But in general I believe the great and authoritative tale a writer has to tell will be the tale of life in his own land. Whatever else he may say, Daudet tells the tale of the boastful, the fatuous and irresistible Midi unless he tells the tale of the worldly sparkle and the worldly tragedy of Paris. Whatever else he may say, Turgenev tells the tale of the brooding sadness and oppression of liberty-loving Russia. Whatever else he may say Howells tells the tale of the speculative soul of America. The "French" novels, the "Russian" novels, the "American" novels of these writers are not "views" of those countries caught through the fancy nor upon a railroad journey, nor assembled from popular reports: they are knowledge of these nations learned through the penetration and imaginings of enriching years of life.

I believe there is no way in which a novel *has* to be made. Or, if there is, it certainly should be opposed for its arbitrariness, in the interest of truth. But the novel in whose pages I "dream true" most fully is generally made, or rather grows, from the natural actions of its men and women, instead of having its movement worked from outside, as it were, by the determination

and ingenuity of the author. I know that in the English of "criticism," or maybe it is the English of advertising, the words "novel of action" are ordinarily used to mean "novel of mechanism"; and that a gay book where the characters are manipulated smartly from spot to spot to suit a skillful plan of the author, as in a marionette theater or a game of chess, is called a "novel of action"; and a novel like "The Old Wives' Tale" or "Fathers and Sons" or "The Quality of Mercy," where the men and women are not pawns or marionettes, but figures of flesh and blood, and are not mechanically manipulated, but act, is never called a "novel of action." So that when one employs the word "action" to indicate in fiction anything else but swordplay, one must qualify the term. I admire Mr. Howells' books because they are made of the *natural* actions of men and women, succeeding and struggling and failing and cheating and hating and loving and parting and marrying and dying. I admire a story of the burning hopes and desires of idealistic youth, like "The Apprenticeship of Lemuel Barker"; and the absurd and tragic episode of his arrest and his night and day in the police station are among the most dramatic

situations I have ever seen in any novel. I admire a story of the misunderstanding of different generations; and the scene where *Dryfoos* stands by his son's coffin in "A Hazard of New Fortunes" is one of the most intense scenes I have ever lived in on a printed page. I admire a story of passion and jealousy and infidelity like "A Modern Instance"; and a story of crime and of human forgiveness and the punishments of the heart and of the law like "The Quality of Mercy"; and a story of the freshest romance of love, like "The Lady of the Aroostook." All the score and more of Mr. Howells' novels present the movement of human nature with the arresting and convincing clearness of realization, with abiding fictive power.

Whatever scene or situation Mr. Howells imprints has always the air of being an integral part of the whole wide world. You are not oppressed, as you sometimes are in the presence of some other scenes and situations in literature, by a starved sense of the violent fictive isolation of some "set" of people, who seem to be cut off from all healthful nourishment from the common springs of the various, actual life of the globe.

These social scenes and situations are as vari-

ous and heretofore untold as Mr. Howells' characters—the public masked ball *Mrs. Bowen, Imogen,* and *Colville* attend in Florence; the shooting of *Conrad Dryfoos* in the car riot; the dedication of the library at Saxmills to the hypocritical exploiter of his townsmen, by his victims; *Marcia Hubbard's* meeting on the Boston afternoon street, with the girl her husband has wronged; the snow battle in "Fennel and Rue"—many other aspects and deeds of life, newly observed and lucidly revealed.

Among all these scenes I chance to like best those that breathe the charm and scent of tangled, outdoor places. That ragged, sharp-branched look of the roads and woods, even of settled country, in America, that look which is somehow of the very essence of a rough sweetness and homeliness, gives me an indescribable and peculiar delight such as one finds in a change of weather or the honk of a wild duck.

"At the verge of a westward-sloping valley was a stretch of many hundred acres, swept by a forest fire a few years before, and now rank with the vegetation which the havoc had enriched. Blueberries and huckleberries, raspberries and blackberries, battened upon the ashes of the pine

and oak and chestnut, and flourished round the charred stumps; the strawberry matted the blackened ground and ran to the border of the woods, where, among the thin grass, it lifted its fruit on taller stems, and swung its clusters in the airs that drew through the alleys of the forest. Here and there were the shanties of Canadian wood-cutters, whom the Shakers had sent to save what fuel they might from the general loss, and whom, at noonday, the pickers came upon as they sat in pairs at their doors, with a can of milk between them, dusky, furtive, and intent as animals. From the first of the strawberries to the last of the blackberries, the birds and chipmunks feasted and only stirred in short flights when the young Shakeresses, shy as themselves, invaded the banquet."

The whole of "The Undiscovered Country" has this openness and sweetness, the ineffable aspect of "free grace." To those who read "dreaming true" a vital novel will say—just as the presence of a friend will say—by all its ways and in its whole outline and gesture something no other creation can tell.

. . . toute âme
Donne à quelqu'un

Sa musique, sa flamme,
Ou son parfum.

It is so, that every creative book breathes to the reader "dreaming true" a special vision of existence. It is so, that each of Mr. Howells' novels says by its presence, something about life which none of its drama alone, nor its scene alone, nor its narrative, nor its characters can tell. It is, I think, the souls in a novel which make its soul. Only art or the living presence may evoke the soul. It is not by speaking of them you know the souls of Mr. Howells' men and women, which are the finest evocations of his art; nor know the soul of each of his novels, but only by reading them.

While each of Mr. Howells' novels sings its own melody it keeps the time of "the ragged rhythm of life." The incongruous contrasts, the familiar queernesses and illogicality of mortal circumstances—the quality in the fates that makes one almost able to rely upon their being irrational and unexpected in their determination —weave that seizing rhythm, through all Mr. Howells' fiction.

After you come home from hearing the exquisite cadences of the low cornices of Parisian

avenues, and the engulfing richnesses of Notre Dame, your spirit will be more engulfed, will be searched to its last fastnesses, as you come into the New York Harbor, by that same ragged rhythm and close harmony in the architectonics of the New York skyline. There is no other music like that music of the New York skyline and of Howells' pages—music telling you the kingdoms of the world are not all main streets, but the cross streets and the side streets—saying that the days of earth are pulsing here, as fully and as wonderfully as upon her highways, in her cornered byways, and the intervals of her great silent places. Maybe this is not what Mr. Howells' music says to other readers. This is what it says for me, at once with the intimacy and originality which is greatness, and the truth which is poetry.

III

Among the ninety odd titles of Mr. Howells' books, I mention at random to indicate their range in form: "The Mother and the Father" (Dramatic Passages); "Stops of Various Quills" (Poems); "London Films" (Travels); "Vittorio Alfieri" (Biography); "Christmas

Every Day'' (A Tale for Children); ''Through the Eye of the Needle'' (Sociological Satire); ''Imaginary Interviews'' (Collected Editorials); ''My Year in a Log-Cabin'' (Autobiography); ''Parting Friends'' (A Farce); ''Questionable Shapes'' (Tales of the Supernatural); ''A Previous Engagement'' (Comedy); ''Criticism and Fiction'' (Literary Criticism).

These titles, in narrating in some sort the variety in form of Mr. Howells' work, do not of course even indicate, far less represent, its extensive variety of treatment and material. A mere title cannot tell the simplicity and distinction of the tragedy, ''Bride Roses,'' whose touch is like the cool petal of a flower, nor the unique funniness and aptness of ''The Elevator'' and ''The Register.''

''Besides, you've no principles—and I *have.*''

''Oh, I've lots of principles, Nettie, but I've no practice.''

Mr. Howells' phrasing, which speaks so fittingly in this instance the tongue of the dialogue of farce, is plastic to any form because it is, as Wordsworth says language should always be, ''the incarnation of thought,'' rather than ''the dress of thought.''

This very quality of being the incarnation of thought, which makes the dialogues of the farces funny, gives Mr. Howells' verse and his poems the dignity of being always the sincere expression of a natural mood. Essential as the sincere expression of a natural mood is to the presence of poetry for my own enjoyment, it happens that the rest of Mr. Howells' work has poetry for me in a greater degree than his metrical lines in general. But in particular there are some of them which sing the loveliest poetry of familiarity, the profound preciousness of life, with the quiet, immortal echo of perfect simplicity:

> The first time, when at night I went about
> Locking the doors and windows everywhere,
> After she died, I seemed to lock her out
> In the starred silence and the homeless air,
> And leave her waiting in her gentle way
> All through the night, till the disconsolate day,
> Upon the threshold, while we slept, awake:
> Such things the heart can bear and yet not break.

The objection has been made to Mr. Howells' poetry, as to other work of his, that it is sad. Such a criticism, in the character of an objection, seems to me inept. For if expression does not recognize sadness, how can it give comfort? I

will go further than this and say that I believe that not only is there no comfort for sadness in the expression which implies an ignoring of loss or an ignoring of injustice or of hardship upon earth, but that the completest mercy of mirth itself remains unknown to him who never ate his bread with tears.

In his editorial writing, too, in social criticism and literary criticism, in biography and autobiography, as in his novels and poems, I am cheered by the fact that Mr. Howells is not of those who consider, like Dickens' people at the picnic, that "whatever is the matter we ought always to dance." I am reassured because he has no alarming, credulous confidence that all that is in American institutions is right; and reassured because his national interest has none of that fatalistic depressing "patriotism" contained in the phrase, "My country, right or wrong," of which Mr. Chesterton remarks that it is as though one should say, "My mother, drunk or sober." This pessimistic species of "patriotism" seems especially undesirable, in a critic.

For if the tones of novels, of plays, of poems present, for the reader who reads "dreaming

true," the inner life, the moods of some changed existence, it would seem to be the function of those other arts in Letters which may be loosely called criticism—editorial and biographical writing, travels and reviews—less to assert a devotion to the errors of one's nation than to open a window for the reader upon its ideas and affairs as a part of the ideas and affairs of the whole world.

In this field Mr. Howells has offered to his readers a view of more scope than that displayed by any other of our men of letters I can call to mind. It was he who, as Mr. William Allen White has pointed out, expressed the idea of altruism to America in a day when that principle was chiefly regarded here simply as "a curious theory." It was he who, as Mr. Frank Harris has pointed out, spoke for freedom of belief and against the murder of the Chicago anarchists, in a day when the whole mind of the American public was as closed, as darkened and insane a bedlam on the subject as the mind of Massachusetts once had been upon the subject of the practical necessity of burning witches.

It has been Mr. Howells, in a very great degree, who has helped America to know, by his acumen

and by the generosity and warmth of his appreciation, the power and genius of the great Russians, Turgenev and Tolstoi, the drama of Ibsen and Björnsen, the dreaming glamour of Du Maurier, since so widely worshiped and apparently so widely forgotten, the thrilling supernaturalism of Hauptmann, the enchanting light on life that falls from the fresh and spiritual tales of the Spanish Valdés and the Italian Verga. His enlightening survey of the ideas of the world reaches not only around us and before us, but back to the true romance and immortal irony of Cervantes and the wisdom of Machiavelli.

Letters is of all others the social art. By social I mean communicative, intended for everyone. A marked gift of Mr. Howells, as a critic, is his talent of geniality, that ambassadorial grace of a man of the world, which is also the grace of genuine democracy and makes the reader feel, in the presence of a thrilling, new idea, or a distinguished, revelative piece of literature, as though this were one's natural sphere.

In his service to the great cause of good reading, reading for the realization of what is before the reader, reading for the free and inspiring

reception of new truth, Mr. Howells' career as a critic has been of incalculable value to all American Letters. By a psychological process very comprehensible, the sort of fiction reader who likes to be subconsciously assured that the stage lion is only *Snug* the joiner, and that the bloodshed, violence, and oppression he is reading about are not as they are in nature but are all child's play—by a very facile turn of thought this sort of reader is apt, when he sees a real lion brought upon the stage by a truthful journalist or reviewer or publisher, to soothe himself by thinking there is nothing to the lion, and he is artificial; apt to soothe himself about some honest factual account of suffering, of poverty or oppression on our earth, by thinking it must be just an illusory story—without reality. The worst effect of the opiate manner of reading fiction is that it unavoidably begets an opiate manner both of reading and of facing fact. Still more than for the writers and the readers of fiction, Mr. Howells' constant stand for the clear discriminations of the truth is of value for the writers and the readers of facts supporting the whole press, the book, the periodical, the newspaper press—all the readers and writers

who are or ought to be concerned with the candid presentation of contemporary history.

IV

The clear discriminations of truth in public expression are especially necessary for our own country, where all confusion of verity is certain to become worse confounded from the circumstance that its people are more heterogeneous, of more various traditions and races and tongues, than those of any other one land.

In his lifelong service for the realization of truth, both as a constructive critic and as a creative artist, Mr. Howells has, I think, made for his nation an immortal contribution to the cause of social sympathy and genuine common understanding which is the great end of all Letters.

Who can come away from the sincerity of his pages without a sense of the profound poetry of realization, the poetry of knowing life? Who can come away without the belief that nothing else is so vital and so thrilling an adventure as to know one's own life, in one's own place on this actual earth of one's own day and generation?

For whatever our uncertainty, our dream or faith about the eternities before us and behind us, we have, by the proof of our senses, this miraculous existence here. In this we know that the greater and deeper achievement of truth bestowed upon us by each generation is all that has helped us to understand our fellow mortals more generously and more rightly on our mysterious journey, and to warm and sustain one another more richly from the unknown fire of life kindled in us in the beginning. No names are more honored or more loved than those which stand for the greater and deeper achievement of truth.

One cannot give thanks exactly for their contribution, for thanks are too little and too personal a thing to give, besides being rather unnatural. One's feeling for the things one cares about is less the sense of thanks than simply one of happiness. It is more with that sense than with any other that one thinks about the beautiful and continuing career of a constant truth-teller, the beloved and honored name of William Dean Howells.

AN APPRECIATION

In the first pages of Du Maurier's "Peter Ibbetson" there is a certain enchanting pen-and-ink drawing, unforgettable for the grace of its introduction to his distinguished tale.

Over all the distance and sky of the sketch swings the dark and delicate-leaved arborescence of a great elm tree. Underneath, *Peter Ibbetson,* as a little English boy in long trousers and a sailor hat with crossed ribbons, is seated at a round table, copying intently from an open book propped up before him.

His task is attentively watched from the arm of his chair by the heroine, little *Mimsey Seraskier,* with her grave, thoughtful face, her cropped black hair and long legs and gathered skirt and sash. And on either side, half hidden in the traceries of the elm tree and looking back at the scene and the thoughts of the children, are the veiled, dream figures of the future man and woman they are to be.

The reader who has learned to "dream true"

with *Peter Ibbetson* will remember that the young draughtsman is copying from Peter Parley's "Natural History" for his friend *"si bonne camarade"* the engraving of an American wild duck: and that these English children in their leafy French garden are lost in a revery of the sweeping great lake uplands and the high-vaulted skies of our own country—

Whither, midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way?

"I would often declaim for her benefit what has always been to me the most beautiful poem in the world, possibly because it was the first I read for myself, or else because it is so intimately associated with those happy days. Under an engraving of a wild duck were quoted W. C. Bryant's lines 'To a Water-Fowl.' They charmed me then and charm me now as nothing else has quite charmed me; I become a child again as I think of them, with a child's virgin subtlety of perception and magical susceptibility to vague suggestions of the infinite—

" '—Dis encore, quand il vole si haut, et qu'il fait froid, et qu'il est fatigué, et que le nuit

vient, mais qu'il ne veut pas descendre.'"

"And I would re-spout:

'All day thy wings have fanned,
At that far height, the cold, thin atmosphere,
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,
Though the dark night is near.'

"A magical susceptibility to vague suggestions of the infinite." Every spring and fall the harrow of the wild geese flies above the chimney-stacks and roof tops of Chicago. Honking calls arise. Somebody shouts "Look! Look! From this window!" None of us, perhaps, watches unmoved the travelers, flying, flying, flying out of their past of brown bayous and fens and into the gray clouds of a future unknown, high above Lake Michigan and our own million-peopled lives here, just as they have been flying for hundreds of years, once over solitary yellow dune, and Indian trail and silver poplar brush, and now over all our baying whistles and wide, steam-fleeced roofways. Long after the honking is still and the harrow has vanished we are buoyed by the brave knowledge of the great, free and sustained flight of our life itself, vanishing into an exquisite and unknown distance.

When Bryant's "Water-Fowl" brushed across

the pages of press comment the other day, on the trail of people's choices of the three best poems for children, I felt a special sense of pleasure. First and foremost because the verses have a fine, musical movement of their own.

Everyone to his own taste in poetry. For me, as it happens, unless a poem have a recognizable musical impetus that bears the thought through to its close, the subject of the lines might generally be far better expressed in prose. The most serious lack of American verse is its musical lifelessness; and one may read a hundred metrical productions that merely keep time correctly, for one which has a distinctive lyric impulse.

We realize very imperfectly the communicative force of a good metrical composition in itself —that is to say, a metrical composition informed throughout with the natural melody of its subject.

Ten or twelve years ago I enjoyed the educational advantage of conducting for a winter at Hull House an English night class, far more instructive, I believe, to the teacher than to the scholars. The members of the class ranged in age from seventeen to about fifty, and were in every grade of English. They were of many

nationalities, though predominantly Russian and Polish. Some were quick and appreciative linguists, men familiar with the best tales of their time, readers of Turgenev, de Maupassant and Sienkiewicz, both in the original and in translation. Others read and wrote simple sentences in any tongue with difficulty. It may be observed parenthetically that, while simple sentences are always difficult to write, and notoriously constitute the material of our classics, it is, for some unknown reason, customary to suppose they will form the natural medium of expression for all beginners in English.

One evening I read aloud to the class Whitman's "Two Veterans"—the elegy of a father and son killed in the Civil War. It had been my superfluous intent to say, before I began to read it, a few words about the historic circumstances of the war, the symbolism of the poem, and the harmonic changes of its grave, quiet rhythm. But as usual our session was crowded. No time was left for this: and as soon as we had finished talking over the lines of work for the next week, I said I would read a poem about the Civil War, and began without explanation. I never shall forget the hush of appreciation and interest that

followed the plain dignity and beauty of the poem—in some of its lines possibly a little remote and shadowed in meaning—but all moving with an onward step so grave, natural and informal. After its close everyone commented, with an understanding in many instances shown by men and girls who could not possibly have defined the separate words to themselves from their brief study, but must have caught the meaning simply from the motion and manner of the composition. "How long ago was this war they were both in?" "Oh—it goes so still. They all walk down the street in the moonlight there. I think it is fine."

And at other times, lighter melodies would convey human information less of the kind we call "elemental" and more individual. I remember especially that the absurdities and ironies sung by Hood's "What do you think of that, my cat? What do you think of that, my dog?" and its funny, talkative presentment of the cautious observations of the questioning bachelor were received with the quickest humorous response. One devoted admirer of Tolstoi, whose English was not then sufficient to have enabled him to feel the English poet's trenchant

acumen from any page of prose in our tongue, remarked with amusement and penetration as he seemed to think over Hood's extraordinary knowledge of life: "This man knows some things about people that Tolstoi does not know."

It is an unfortunate American custom to regard a poem, line by line, or even foot by foot, or word by word; without any apparent understanding that a poetic creation will best speak its truth and beauty by the gesture and change of its entire harmonic plan from the first word to the last, and by its whole presence.

Our dull note by note manner of regarding poetry is responsible for an enormous amount of what may be called stationary American verse, verse which simply stands still and marks time, but never makes a forward movement. It is probably true that our closer attention to detail than to sweep, mass, spacing and general architecture in poetry has given us certain minor excellencies. Contemporary American verse has an extraordinary correctness and seldom claims the indulgence of poetic license. It is not filled with elisions, or contractions. It generally spares us "o'er" and "'gainst" and "'gins" and such flatting in rhyme as "fair" and "her."

But the question which should be asked about a poem, in my own view, is not whether it is correct or incorrect, but whether it is quick or dead.

If songs are to be sung and dances to be danced, poetry is to be lived. Surely the quality that makes a poem is its power to beat in one's pulses, so that its whole motion imparts one continuous, flowing and sustained impression.

In his life of Scott, Lockhart observes both of Scott and Dryden that they each determined, as writers of poetry, to sacrifice detail to general movement: and to dispense with "nicely turned lines, sedulous study and long and repeated correction and revision" so their places were supplied by "rapidity of conception," a readiness of expressing every idea without losing anything by the way, perpetual animation, and elasticity of thought; and language never labored, never loitering, never (in Dryden's own phrase) "cursedly confined."

This is characteristic enough of the hand that can skirl a hundred fleet-noted fifes and bagpipes with

> Pibroch of Donuil Dhu,
> Pibroch of Donuil,
> Wake thy wild voice anew,

Summon Clan-Conuil!
Come away, come away—
Hark to the summons!
Come in your war array
Gentles and commons.

Come from deep glen, and
From mountains so rocky;
. . . . . .

There is no place where one can well break off.

Lockhart tells a tale that shows very clearly the carrying power of a poetic movement. It seems that "The Lady of the Lake" was issued from the Ballantyne press at the time of the Peninsular Campaign against Napoleon. Among the allies in Spain and Portugal a Scotch company served under Sir Adam Ferguson. "In the course of the day when the 'Lady of the Lake' first reached Captain Ferguson," says Lockhart, "he was posted with his company on a point of ground exposed to the enemy's artillery. The men were ordered to lie prostrate on the ground. While they kept that attitude the captain, kneeling at their head, read aloud the description of the battle in Canto VI, and the listening soldiers only interrupted him by a joyous Huzza, whenever the French shot struck the bank close above them."

Impossible to believe that a company of Scotch privates followed with precision the complicated fortunes of Clan Alpine, *Roderick Dhu* and that delightful, contemplative *Ellen,* who cannot hold anyone's attention, even the author's, and is merely thoroughly but very rapidly worshiped by him and by the reader in hasty intervals between the woodland sights and lays and skirmishes. What the company heard was the swing and movement of the whole composition—the quality that in a very different guise and expression cried across the sea to an Englishman in London the very flight of an American wild bird, as we may watch it across the southwest shore of Lake Michigan next September.

The other very simple reason why I read with such pleasure the mention of Bryant's poem was because it is a freehand, original drawing from a life-model observed in our own country. This treatment of a poetic subject would be in accord with the custom of the poet, who might desire to follow intelligently and imaginatively the custom of the classics—the manner, let us say, of the epitaph and song of the Greek anthology.

He who wishes to learn from its anonymous contributors will surely not merely copy with

variations translated praises to the name of a Greek, nor will the searching student of the scheme of a Japanese color print imitate a sketch of Japanese cherry blossoms. The one student will try to create a fitting tribute to some valiant quality he has discerned in an admired figure of his own generation, and the other will try to compose from the rhythms of a colored page the charm that has blown to him from the geranium of his own window box. Otherwise he has read his anthology and looked at Japanese color prints to little purpose; has failed to understand their inner and spiritual grace and only very literally and superficially observed their outer and visible form. He has been dead to the profound charm of first-hand work, the incitement of the look straight ahead as clearly as the artist can see in his own surrounding life, and has not received these productions with "a magical susceptibility to suggestions of the infinite."

It is idle to speculate on the reasons why American writers from New York, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Iowa, and all our other local habitations so often delight to write in the character of ancient Greeks and of medieval English and

of Syrian lovers—why do the Syrians love so much more than any other nation?—and of Eve, and of nautch girls, instead of about whatever truth they may have observed in their own existence. With all deference to our kindly custom of speaking for the ancient Greeks, it must be insisted that they have done this remarkably well for themselves.

As for our American spokesmen for all the other races, ages and nations we represent so freely in our metrical works, their attention should I think be directed to those odd *Sambos* and *Gumbos* in Thackeray's pages, who are always grinning and saying "massa," and to that queer Indian in Wordsworth's "Ruth." "He was a lovely youth. I guess, the panther in the wilderness was not so wild as he." They will do well to recall the strange ineptitudes that even genius itself may produce in fanciful conception of an alien consciousness and scene. Nothing much less like either the picturesqueness or the powers of the Negro or the American Indian races can be conceived than these tableau-like negroes and Indians of Thackeray and of Wordsworth.

Before a poem is lived by the reader, it must,

I think, be lived by the author. In the "Lines to a Water-Fowl" stir the buoyant motions of large, fresh waters and their eternal difference from the surge of the sea, the wide distances, the delicate lake-mists, the passage of multitudinous bird-flocks, the deep breath and absolute mood of a living national landscape.

The whole poem is oriented by references to our past and our future that sing at once intimately and largely the epic tone and continental outline of our country. Nearly all of us must have heard a father or a grandfather, or someone's else father or grandfather telling of the flights of the passenger pigeons or the sight, upon camping expeditions or railroad surveys, of herds of buffalo reaching as far as the eye could see. The migration of wild life is one of the most suggestive features of the background of our whole history.

"It was a great, memorable day," says John Muir, in the Wisconsin chapters of "My Boyhood and Youth," "when the first flock of passenger pigeons came to our farm. . . . The beautiful wanderers flew like the winds in flocks of millions from climate to climate in accord with the weather, finding their food . . . in fields

and forests thousands of miles apart. I have seen flocks streaming south in the fall so large that they were flowing over from horizon to horizon in an almost continuous stream all day long, at the rate of forty or fifty miles an hour, like a mighty river in the sky, widening, contracting, descending, like falls and cataracts, and rising suddenly here and there in huge ragged masses like high-splashing spray. . . . A comparatively small flock swept thousands of acres perfectly clean of acorns in a few minutes. . . . The entire flock constantly changing from front to rear, revolving something like a wheel, with a low buzzing wing-roar that could be heard a long way off. . . . 'Oh, what bonnie, bonnie birds!' we exclaimed over the first that fell into our hands. . . . 'Oh, what colors! Look at their breasts, bonnie as roses, and their necks aglow wi' every color.' . . . 'They beat a'. Where did they a' come fra' and where are they a' gan?' "

Our vast, alien Americanizing populations, the presence of the Panama canal, uncounted present-day observations tell us that one of the most stirring conditions of this country and this con-

tinent is that they are still the scene of great migrations. We all perceive poetry that deserves the name, not only from the page and on paper, but long after we have turned the leaf. It has sensitized us to the touch, sound and fragrance of the winds of the world, and whole, coming enterprise of our lives, and given us a roused imaginative realization of our own futures in creation. As with *Mimsey Seraskier* and *Peter Ibbetson,* the dream presence of our potential selves is near us when we read a poem. When we are done, the closing stanza of the life-drawn outline and individual, musical movement will be found to have been the finis of a prelude. Something in us rises free and self-sustained upon a great adventure. No other soul has ever known before nor will ever pass again through quite the same experience each one will have upon his journey here. The heat of the day clears and the miracle of our existence breathes lucidly around us in the evening light:

Whither, midst falling dew,
  While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue
  Thy solitary way?

WITH WALT WHITMAN IN CAMDEN, VOLUME III

I

A NEW book about Whitman is welcome to all the poet's admirers. The pleasure of reading any book which genuinely expresses Walt Whitman is comparable to the pleasure of taking a walk in a great country through various landscapes—a walk partly through settled regions, partly on blazed wood-trails, partly through unblazed forest-depths and jungles.

The country is all unique. Its horizons are all wide. Needless to say any book of Horace Traubel's about his beloved friend does genuinely express Walt Whitman. And on opening the volume of the journal of his companionship with the poet from November 1st, 1888, to January 20th, 1889, it is immediately perceptible that one has returned to the same large land one visited first with such rich reward in the broad fields of "Specimen Days," and afterwards again and

still again in the two Traubel journals of Whitman's life published in the years 1906 and 1908.

One's first question on opening the present large volume, one's last question on closing it, is —what does this contribute to one's former impression of our greatest poet? Does it intensify our earlier vision of that whole wonderful country of his life and nature? Does it open for us regions unexplored?

II

In an attempt to answer these questions something must be said about the form of edition and publication of this book of 1914. The volume seems, I think, to take for granted a previous knowledge of the poet's biography. It begins in the middle. It ends in the middle. Many, many of its references to men and events would, I believe, be obscure to the reader not already familiar with the earlier volumes mentioned, as well as with "Leaves of Grass" and "Specimen Days."

The music of Whitman's speech as a poet and the music of Whitman's existence as a man are almost inseparable. You cannot hear the

rhythm of the Camden years without wishing to know how their whole tune moves from the beginning to the end. As Whitman himself very greatly prized continuity and completeness of impression, the fragmentary issuance of his most authoritative biography seems unsuitable and unfortunate for the subject it presents.

The older special admirers of Whitman will of course carry the air of the Camden life in their head for several years and begin again where they left off. This should not have been asked of his new, lay readers. And, after all, Whitman wrote and lived for lay readers. His publishers, his editors, even his devoted biographer might, in the present reader's view, wisely remember that not they, nor any person who "knew Whitman," any person now in possession of foregone facts about Whitman, will sustain the future fame of the creator of our most magnificent poetry, but persons coming freshly to its truth—persons unknown.

III

About Walt Whitman's years of illness from 1883 till the date of his death in 1892, we have the three volumes of Mr. Traubel's journal, pub-

lished throughout a period of eight years and by three different publishers. Impossible to say who is at fault here for what can only be called poor engineering. But both new acquaintances and old friends of Whitman's name must alike desire, in learning of his life, a presentation less broken, a biography full, connected and unified.

To the lay reader this third volume begins, as has been said, in the middle. The middle of what? The person who has carried in his head all these years the tune of Horace Traubel's journal of Walt Whitman's days in 1888 recognizes that he is again in the littered room of the frame house in Camden, which friends had given to the poet about five years before.

In 1888 Whitman was in his seventieth year. He had never fully recovered from the terrific physical and mental strain he endured at forty-three, in nursing, for three years, in the army hospitals about Washington at the time of the Civil War. Before the war, Whitman had been engaged in the printing trade in Brooklyn, where he was occupied also as a miscellaneous writer, and had composed at thirty-six "Leaves of Grass." He had issued three enlarged editions before his nursing experience.

After three years of nursing, his health was too broken for this employment. He obtained an appointment as a clerk in the Interior Department. Six months later, James Harlan, Secretary of the Interior, dismissed him—not from any inefficiency whatever of Whitman's as a department clerk, but because he had written "Leaves of Grass," of which Harlan disapproved.

W. D. O'Connor, a friend of Whitman's, intervened with an eloquent vindication called "The Good Gray Poet" which has ever since characterized Whitman's name. The Assistant State's Attorney, Ashton, intervened. He afterward gave Whitman an account of his interview with Harlan, published for the first time in this present volume.

"The Assistant Attorney General said: 'Mr. Harlan, I know something of W. W.'s life, and if you will listen to me, I will tell you what it has been.' He then described W.'s life. Since the commencement of the war he had devoted himself to the care of the wounded and sick of our armies; had been to the front, had been on hand after all the great battles; labored actively for nearly three years in that field; and had

actually ministered to, in direct contact with them, more than a hundred thousand cases of wounded and sick men; had, indeed, sought his appointment so that he might be able to spend his leisure hours in the service of the maimed and sick in camps and hospitals around Washington; and was now continuing quietly and faithfully at that work.

"Mr. Harlan said after this: 'You have changed my opinion of his personal character, but I shall adhere to my decision dismissing him.'"

Harlan did adhere to his decision, which is a frequent subject of reference in this volume. The Attorney General appointed Whitman as a clerk in his own office. Here the poet remained in an admired and satisfactory discharge of his duties until his first stroke of paralysis—eight years later. His brother Jeff had cared for him after this illness until the time of the friendly provision described.

Between the incident of the Harlan dismissal in 1865 and the year of 1888, Whitman published "Drum-Taps"; an English edition of "Leaves of Grass," edited by W. M. Rossetti; four successively enlarged editions of "Leaves

of Grass,'' one of these suppressed in Massachusetts and reissued in Philadelphia; ''Democratic Vistas''; ''Specimen Days and Collect''; and ''November Boughs.''

In poetry, melodies unheard may be sweeter. In prose, comment on incidents unnarrated is apt to be confusing. And before speaking frequently, throughout six hundred pages, of the points of personal history we have mentioned, the reader deserves to have been told what they were. These then are the chief ''battles long ago'' the poet talks over with his friends, Traubel, Harned and Dr. Osler, in his littered room in Camden.

IV

In the presence of a strong vision everything composes to the effect it sees. Doubtless to the companions of Corot, mist-hung glades constantly glimmered in the distance as they walked with him over the earth. The whole of this book which Whitman inhabits is filled with the sense of the dignity of life—its preciousness in every aspect—the sense, too, that life and death are hardly separable and are merged one in the other. From every page of Whitman the passage to

India opens. From every page, too, the days arise from their fathomless deeps.

It is so with all the tenor of the hours at Camden. With all their tenor—but not with all the time the reader passes in learning such matters as why Mr. Harned remained in the Republican Party; and that Whitman carefully removed and retained stamps from the return envelopes of autograph seekers; and that he could not find one of Edward Carpenter's letters in the mass upon the floor; and "Henry Wright called today. George's wife in this afternoon." "No mail today except a letter from Mary Costelloe; it contains no news—no news at all; all are well, bright."

There is something too much of these Homeric lethargies. Something too much besides of Whitman's opinions—of so much less value than his nature. It is, of course, part of the general circus, a part of the buoyancy and what he called gay-heartedness that Whitman was so largely made of, that he should suppose W. D. O'Connor's two "Leaves of Grass" letters were "unmatched in English literature"; and we may receive that view with delight. But one becomes sated early with Whitman's propensity for

rating writers' gifts according to their devotion to "Leaves of Grass."

Besides there are traces that indicate that Whitman himself had not always intrinsically the conceit indicated by his own speech. He can say of somebody or other named Ned Wilkins who protested, when a group of young men at Pfaff's made light of "Leaves of Grass,"—"The man is one of the immortals. He deserves to be canonized." But later in a mood of graver and serener judgments, he observes quietly about some documents he gives to Traubel: "In the final sense they are not records of my life—of my personal life—of Walt Whitman—but scripture material, applying to a movement in which I am only an episode."

It will be observed that these two speeches have the air of truth, not only to the nature of Whitman, but of numbers of other men, as seen through a considerable period of time in the freedom of domestic life. At one moment the poet boasts, blows and utters words representing no real conception whatever either his own or anyone else's—only representing a need of the relief of gusty, intemperate statement. Ned Wilkins has praised his poems. Ned Wilkins is

one of the immortals. At another minute he can face fact with every justice and strength of impersonality, and know very clearly and magnanimously that it is not his praisers, nor he, nor his poetry that are a matter of concern, but only his power of contributing to truth.

Whitman did not wish to be "prettified"; but it cannot add much to our knowledge of him or certainly of Letters to learn his views of authors whom he has not read. At times the biographer seems strangely literal in his transcription of his friend's foolish sayings. Thus, for instance, Traubel says one day that Dr. Bucke is reading Parkman "and thinks a lot of him." Whitman replies grandly, if somewhat severely. "He ought if he thinks a lot of anybody. Parkman deserves it." Yet, we learn afterwards, when Parkman's histories are mentioned that "W. said: 'I have never read them—not one of them.'"

With some hilarity we discover about book after book, Tolstoi, Carlyle's "Letters," etc., that Whitman "got about a third of the way through," or "I still hold on there." About Froude's "Caesar," "I noticed the Froude lying on the basket, open, face down. 'Have you gone

far with "Caesar"?' He smiled oddly as if the question seemed humorous. 'Not far as yet—' But as to 'Theophrastus Such': 'I am not so greatly struck yet; George Eliot is not so immediately alluring as Froude.'"

But in general Whitman's attitude about women writers, and his remarks about them, may be described as simply rousing an absolute delight. He speaks as a species of enriching Santa Claus in real life, endowing those he meets with every gift they wish. "My heart turns to Sand. I regard her as the brightest woman ever born."

"Better than Hugo as a novel-writer?"

"Oh! Greatly!"

Anne Gilchrist is "one of the cutest, sanest souls that ever blessed the earth"—and Miss Lucy Larcom, "the cutest, wisest of us all."

Can anybody fail to like these thoroughgoing tributes? No one worth the name of human, it would seem. Perhaps the relatives of Victor Hugo.

It is really too trying to be forced by mere slavish honesty to admit, after one has finished the third volume of "Walt Whitman at Camden," the presence of a singular though rather substantial fancy that perhaps with the excep-

tion of his own works, our greatest American poet never read any book entirely through, whether by man or woman, but only glanced with pleasant nonchalance at the pages of their volumes as they lay about his Sibylline room; obtained from them what he called "glints"; or amused himself agreeably by poking out paths through them with his cane.

V

It was obviously not possible for Whitman to be very specific nor to care for ascertainments. He speaks often of "the American people." But it is, it would appear, a misty, unascertained and conventionalized vision of masses of brawny, well-developed and classically beautiful persons, like the models of a processional frieze, that makes up his conception of "the American people," rather than the familiar figures we actually see about us.

One of the most interesting passages in the volume occurs where Mr. Traubel makes a heroic attempt to track the poet down, to force him to be specific about the needs of the United States, about the solution of the country's difficulties.

Whitman has said, " 'I do not understand what the Henry George men want: nor do I trouble myself about it.' 'But you do trouble yourself about it,' I said. . . . 'Your book is full of anarchism and Henry George.' He looked at me: 'You mean by implication? . . . I am sure, taken that way, that I might be convicted of a hundred philosophies.' . . . 'You said you didn't so much object to Socialism as to being talked to about it.' He laughed. 'Did I say that?' . . . 'The way you talked I should judge your objection to Tucker and the other fellows to be general, wholesale.' 'No indeed: I would not have that implied: I honor them.' . . . I said: 'You ask: what do they want? what do they want? Let me ask you: what do you want?' 'Do you mean that as a question for me to answer?' 'Yes: I'd like to hear you answer it.' 'Suppose I would rather not answer it?' 'I would continue to want to hear you answer it, anyhow.'

"W. stopped. Closed his eyes a few winks. . . . I waited. Finally he got going with great feeling and vehemence: 'I want the people . . . men, women, children: I want them to have what belongs to them: not a part of it, not most

of it, but all of it: I want anything done that will give the people their proper opportunities —their full life: anything, anything: whether by one means or another, I want the people to be given their due.' I said . . . 'You want the people to have all: how are they to get all?' 'Oh! there is the rub: how are they?' . . . 'Well, Tucker thinks he knows: Henry George thinks he knows: Pease thought he knew. . . . What they want—what Tucker wants, what George wants, what Pease wants—is exactly what you want.' . . .

"He answered at once: 'I suppose you are holding me up with good reason: I have no right to discourage the boys: they are doing their work. . . . I don't dispute with them. Why should I? I want the real things to get said and done whether they please me or please anybody in particular or not: the real things: the people's things. . . . I may be dodging your doctrines: I'm not dodging your purpose: I am with you all in what you aim for: solidarity, the supremacy of the people: all the people in possession of what belongs to all the people but has been stolen from them: I'm with you in that: but I can't follow you in all the intricate in-

volvements, theories, through which you pursue your fierce agitations.' ''

This is exactly what might have been expected from the poet who said,

> Arguments and logic do not convince. The damp of the night drives deeper into my soul.

The reader should know the passage in its entirety rather than in this mere hint. But it is plain that Mr. Traubel might almost as reasonably have asked a definite and detailed economic program of Mr. Theodore Thomas.

We are told on the cover that "With Walt Whitman in Camden" is "the most truthful biography in the language." But the claim does not appear, so far, justified. Indeed, Whitman himself repeatedly says he has a secret to tell Traubel which he has never confided to him. That quality in the poet's temperament that makes his mind float away instinctively from the specific and towards the vague, removes the book of his life—at present, at least—from the ranks of openly candid and frank, though not of sincere biography. The passion for absolute clarity, for directness, has never seemed a part of our great singer's nature. His is indeed almost

a secret biography. "With Walt Whitman in Camden" is silent about all the poet's years until he was nearly seventy.

It has a beautiful, a merciful and dignified word near the close about the existence of the physical needs of nature in the lives of women and of men. But it brings us no wisdom—not only no dogma nor conclusion, which was to be expected—but no responsible thought concerning the wise and unwise fulfillment of these needs. And in the subject so often expressed in his poetry, of right and fine relations between women and men, Whitman appears in these Camden years, and according to the testimony of this volume, simply to have taken very little interest.

Beyond a description of his devotion to his mother and of hers to him, and of the fact that she never understood him, nor cared for his poetry, beyond this, only a few words, practically always of tribute and admiration, are spoken of women. Among them, Whitman seems to have possessed, at this period, few acquaintances and no intimate friends—none certainly to whom he ever appears to have turned with instinctive confidence in any hour of need, none who seems to have depended deeply upon him. This charac-

teristic is a striking element of his Camden days.

The tale of these seems to open for us, in that large country of Whitman's nature we have mentioned, no unexplored regions. We knew before that very room, his funniness, his courage, his buoyancy, his vagueness, his greatness—nearly all the qualities narrated. The new volume, does, however, intensify our vision of that country in two ways. It is all vivified by a profounder sense of the poet's companionship with his friends; and its shadows are lengthened by the coming night.

The value of this section of Whitman's biography to the present writer lies not in its presentation of a great truth-seeker. Other men have sought truth more thoroughly and keenly, far, than Whitman. Still less may it justly be considered a presentation of a great truth-teller, a "most truthful biography." There are passages of un-self-sparing honesty in the biography of Huxley, passages in the life of Burns, and in "De Profundis" which make "secrets" on the part of a man who has decided to tell his knowledge of life to the world seem merely self-concerned and almost childish. But we have here the record of magnificent friend-

ships: and of the deepest abiding force of a great poet.

VI

"When I turn and look about at my friends—the friends I have had; how sacred, stern, noble they have been; the few of them; when I have thought of them I have realized the intrinsic immensity of the human spirit, and felt as if I lived environed by Gods."

The music of Whitman's speech as a poet, the music of his existence as a man are almost inseparable. The very impulse that said, "the invisible root out of which the poetry dearest to humanity grows is friendship," sings forth in those Camden days; just as in the great poems that echo unforgettably for their long-time admirers, the music of movements immortal and eternal.

"Surge, surge, surge, close on the wave comes the wave behind." The whole buoyancy and brave forward motion of life pours through the dimnesses and daily dullnesses of the poet's long struggle in his cluttered room, his poverty, his helplessness, his confinement, more splendidly than in the open air, to all the accompaniment

of the strength and the youth in which Whitman's poems clearly were first created. What is poetry worth? Everything, if it carry a human soul through to the end so greatly. To be calm, to be brave, in poverty and difficulties. To live like a god among gods, in a small sickroom. To be beautifully happy, to give happiness when little is left to you but your last, doubtful breath. The impulse that has done this is indeed a proud, a great force upon earth. None could be greater.

POETRY AND CRITICISM

Samuel Butler is nowhere wittier than in his characterization of our peculiar Anglo-Saxon smugness in criticism. "For me," observes *Miss Skinner,* daughter of the great *Dr. Skinner,* during a call of *Ernest Pontifex,* "a simple chord of Beethoven is enough."

Perhaps nobody exists who would dream of asserting his enjoyment of a painting or a statue in this ridiculous manner, or of looking at a canvas or a modeled figure inch by inch, instead of regarding its whole movement and structure.

But if one turns to printed comment on poetry, one may find *Miss Skinners* in plenty. Those critics appear rather few who enjoy a poem as a distinct entity, and as one enjoys a special cordial, or a particular piece of fruit-cake, or the revelation and fresh breath of some green living scene, or one's pleasure in the individuality of an acquaintance. Many people regard a poem not at all as a unified piece of

expression fused and animated by one musical design and spirit, but as a collection of separate lines: and look at the poet's canvas only through an inch-by-inch reading glass.

This sort of critic is always wondering why Shakspere said,

> Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
> The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
> Or to take *arms* against a *sea* of troubles—

thus violating the rules of somebody or other's college rhetoric rules about mixing metaphors. The lay reader and the playgoer who are harking to the full and perturbed motion of the act and the verse and Hamlet's mental state will find the phrase merely fitting and expressive, in the natural course of the play and of the mood it evokes in the hearer: and will not regard the line in isolation from its context more than the observer of Saint-Gaudens' statue of Lincoln will focus his gaze on some single unfastened button on the emancipator's coat, and find the work of art difficult to understand because the sculptor did not place the button in its corresponding buttonhole.

By such sharp, disconcerting pounces on detail college professors have done much to render all

poetic text unintelligible, and to hypnotize the nation into a sincere, nervous ignorance of poetry, and an unjust, though highly reasonable aversion for it.

These sharp pounces on detail are inspired by a prevalent American "literary" conception that the instinctive mental action of the reader of a poem is not so much to understand—still less to like or enjoy a poem as one may understand and enjoy a song one hears pouring out of the window of a stranger's house on one's way down the street of one's own life—as to estimate the poem and "put it in its place" among the metrical productions of the whole world as arranged in one's own mind.

This is partly a heritage from our Protestant habit, not to say vice, of judgment. We arrange our known poets, or our known poems, competitively according to their distance from some arbitrary goal—often one they had never heard of, and certainly had no ambition to reach. Our poetical criticism is greatly given over to such statements as that Shelley's "Sky-Lark" is the third greatest lyrical poem since Herrick's "Bid me to live"; or that Keats' "Hyperion" ranks second or sixth or seventh among the seven

heroic poems in classic diction since Milton's "Lycidas."

This making of lists, this putting of poets and of poems in their places, may be continued almost indefinitely. The critic who likes to pursue this strange pastime lives in a hallucination in whose haze he supposes that he has actually read all the books in the world; or rather that the books he has read constitute all the books there are. As no one on earth has ever read all the books there are, he could not have a more secure mania, sheltered as it is by everyone's vast if more modest ignorance. By a mere act of will he may assert, and none will gainsay, his authority that "Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part" is the third or nineteenth or forty-third greatest sonnet of passion. Nobody has read all the world's sonnets: still less has he observed which of these were unconscious nominees for the office of the first sonnet of passion; nor marked his ballot for them; nor heard which of them seemed to be the most successful candidate. At first glance it appears a dreary circumstance that anyone should prefer the attempt to arrange sonnets of passion in fixed places among the metrical productions of the universe, instead of

knowing each creation as a piece of human life and expression. But, considered more philosophically, the phenomenon appears a wise compensation for an irremediable loss.

Who loves his friend according to that friend's standing and place in the world? Certainly none but the unfortunate person who has never experienced the profound charm of any real friendship. In the same way it may be said that no one has ever had the happiness of really reading poetry unless he has cared for a poem sheerly for the truth and beauty of its own enriching presence.

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

In a delightful conversation quoted in an essay entitled "The Dusk of the Gods" in a recent *Atlantic Monthly,* George Moore says, "If there be a future for the English language, which I doubt, it is in America. A great deal of your speech is Elizabethan, and what is not you have invented. You are still inventing a language, while we have stopped; we take what additions foreigners and our savage subjects supply us, but that is all. Perhaps in America another language will arrive, adapted to literary usage . . . out of your slang, your dialects."

Appearing almost on the morrow of the death of our most accomplished singer of dialect lyrics, these penetrating words brought to mind one of the most beautiful endowments of James Whitcomb Riley.

Like *Uncle Remus* he was an inventor of language, and his unique singing speech has contributed to human expression. He brought words from life into letters. Familiar phrases

which had vibrated as mere blatant discords at the touch of a lesser writer, were at the hands of his skill harmonies from the strings of his spirit's lute. He was a magician who could use terms such as "Looky there!" and "Lawzy!" in a manner that lent a biting reality to tragedy, and echoed in your memory like the tale of something an acquaintance has looked on in life.

Pore folks lives at Lonesomeville;
  Lawzy! but they're pore!
Houses with no winders in,
  And hardly any door:
Chimbly all tore down, and no
  Smoke in that at all—
Ist a stovepipe through a hole
  In the kitchen-wall!

Pump that 's got no handle on;
  And no woodshed—And *wooh!*
Mighty cold there, choppin' wood,
  Like pore folks has to do!
Winter-time, and snow and sleet
  Ist fairly fit to kill!—
Hope to goodness *Santy Claus*
  Goes to Lonesomeville!

Music enters at the spaces left by all those hard g's and guttural word-endings he cuts out so gracefully. The reproduction of illiteracy is generally a mere verbatim copy of ignorance;

but James Whitcomb Riley's reproduction is a subtle enhancement of the tone of the sound he modulates. I suppose no one will deny that "shadder" sounds longer and thinner and more alarming than "shadow" or that "saranade" has a more harmonic air than "serenade."

And when the boys u'd saranade, I've laid so still in bed
I've even heard the locus'-blossoms droppin' on the shed
When "Lily Dale" er "Hazel Dell," had sobbed and died away—

. . . I want to hear the *old* band play.

Besides the lovely musical web he wove of our unpromising Middle Western colloquialisms, he has given us innumerable words of his own improvisation, as in "the kyouck and gobble of the struttin' turkey-cock" and the description of the boy standing up and driving, who

—— comes skallyhootin' through
Our alley, with one arm
A-wavin' Fare-ye-well to you—!

Widely enjoyed and beloved, the poetry of James Whitcomb Riley will probably always in our lifetime encounter a species of objection in

the minds of many Americans. His poetry sings. Its force is emotional. Its sincere charm is absolute, and depends not at all on being something like something else—on the audience's recollection of Greek verse, or familiarity with Japanese art, or impressionistic landscape. To the kind of reader for whom a recognizable, musical idea limits, instead of greatly liberating, the communicative faculty of poetry, to the kind of reader who thinks of poetry as a species of more tight-mouthed and cryptic prose, to the kind of reader who is worried by poets who will not give him, so to speak, any reliable library references for their inspiration—to such American readers as these James Whitcomb Riley's poetry must always seem all wrong and misguided. Anyone can understand his songs. People have always been cutting them out of the newspapers and reciting them at ice cream sociables and church benefits. They are a part of the national consciousness. To Brahmins of poetry these are disquieting manifestations inclining them to the Brahminical error of supposing that poetry which is commonly understood and enjoyed cannot be supposed to be of beauty or value.

The reader of "A Small Boy and Others" will recall a charming passage descriptive of a relative of the James family who investigated an inherited estate in remote fastnesses of our land typified by Henry James as "the Beaver Kill." This large, humorous phrase seemed to indicate, in Henry James absorbing recollections, all in our country that rose west of the Allegheny mountains, all that was not turned towards the east, just as in the American Indian phrase the words "High-Muck-a-Muck" denote all manner of persons of constituted authority among other races—expressions both of them fascinating to consider, defining as they do a comprehensive, but clearly and even agreeably acknowledged ignorance expressed with childlike recoursefulness.

Undoubtedly the wisdom and beauty of James Whitcomb Riley can never sing to the ears of those of our compatriots who readily adopt the ignorance of sophistication without troubling themselves to learn its knowledge; and on account of the fact that his poetry belongs to the Beaver Kill it must remain undistinguished for the whole range of taste, so pleasantly disparaged by George Moore, which does not care for

indigenous expression but only for expression derived.

"If a shipload of Elgin marbles," he says, "had been landed at Yokohama in the seventeenth century there would have been no more Japanese art. They would have said, 'This is the thing to do,' and they would have done it—badly.

"When European art did come to Japan, it killed the Japanese formula. The Japanese now go to Paris to paint, and a pretty mess they make of it; or they stay at home and try to imitate their own handicraft of two hundred years ago; but the inward vision has vanished from Japan."

Innumerable, doubtless, are those dwellers in the country of Lincoln's familiar habitation who possess a hopeless faith or fancy that the Middle West has been blessed by the presence of an inward vision unnamable. Rock-shod rivers, brown prairies, friendly towns, the wide run of grain fields and corn-bottoms must seem always for the lovers of that lay of land the natural home of a spirit inexpressibly spacious, plain and free. The air that forever comforts you and breaks your heart and assuages you again with pleasurable pain in James Whitcomb Riley's

poetry is the melody that tells you that you are a part of that spirit of life. You may have dropped beneath it a hundred and a thousand times. But you have known its wild and infinitely endearing grace. Your soul has felt the shadows of its might. You, too, have lived these staunchnesses and dreams that are the last realities, and heard the band play in the square and seen the neighbors bring home *Coon Dog Wess.*

I once had occasion to read to an English night class of young Russian and Polish people, James Whitcomb Riley's "Raggedy Man." In their pleasure in its sincerity and quiet intangible delight I felt a tribute to a certain magic of interpretation in the poem I had never really appreciated before.

O the Raggedy Man! He works for Pa;
An' he's the goodest man you ever saw!
He comes to our house every day,
  An' waters the horses, an' feeds 'em hay;
An' he opens the shed—an' we all ist laugh
When he drives out our little old wobble-ly calf;
An' nen—ef our hired girl says he can—
  He milks the cow for 'Lizabuth Ann—
    Ain't he a' awful good Raggedy Man?
      Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

The Raggedy Man—one time, when he
Wuz makin' a little bow'-n'-erry fer me,
Says, "When you're big like your Pa is,
Air *you* go' to keep a fine store like his—
An' be a rich merchant—an' wear fine clothes?
Er what *air* you go' to be, goodness knows?"
An' nen he laughed at 'Lizabuth Ann,
An' I says, "'M go' to be a Raggedy Man!—
I'm ist go' to be a nice Raggedy Man!
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!"

Something of our own, not like the spirit of other lands, something better far indeed than we are often able to be, and better than our thoughts or any of the formulae, but somehow like our best fleet instincts, spoke truly to alien listeners in the genius of this poem sung as lightly as the wind blew down the locust blossoms on the shed roof.

When all our ways and days are vanished, and far-off people hardly distinguish the memory of Henry George from that of George Washington, what will tell the nameless spirit we live, to distant listeners? Some such word as this, one may hope—simple and brief and true out of the silence.

Nothing has been said here of James Whitcomb Riley's remarkable gift in characterization —so that not a creature appears in his brief

lyric tales, from the thoroughly disagreeable wife of *Mylo Jones* to the heroic *Coon Dog Wess,* but is fully individualized. Nothing has been said of his nonsense poems or his enchanting parodies, or his verse not in dialect. For some of us—or rather for me, at least—James Whitcomb Riley's poetry has become a part of the country of one's mind; and one walks about in it without thinking of the names of the different places there; and hears—

> The echoes of old voices, wound
> In limpid streams of laughter where
> The river Time runs bubble-crowned,
> And giddy eddies ripple there;
> Where roses, bending o'er the brink,
> Drain their own kisses as they drink
> And ivies climb and twine and cling
> About the song I never sing.—

and listens to the song one never sings oneself.

Here are poems made of the living word. In the mortality of their maker, it is a comfort to turn back to their charm and truth that sing so far in the surrounding night—

> Sing on! sing on, you gray-brown bird,
> Sing from the swamps, the recesses—pour your chant
> from the bushes,
> Limitless out of the dusk, out of the cedars and pines.

BRONTË POEMS

In 1846, the poems of Charlotte, Emily and Anne Brontë, under the pseudonyms of Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell, were published by Aylott and Jones of London. Mr. Clement Shorter tells us that the book cost the authors thirty guineas (about one hundred and fifty dollars): and two copies supplied the public demand.

In 1850, after the deaths of Emily and Anne, Charlotte issued a new edition of the 1846 volume, including other poems of theirs and notes of her own.

Mr. A. C. Benson has recently arranged a little book composed of selections from these publications, and from verses of Charlotte, Emily, Anne and Branwell, which have been heretofore unprinted.

Prefaced by a reproduction of the painting of Charlotte, Emily and Anne, by Branwell Brontë, which hangs in the National Portrait Gallery, the frank purpose and the chief interest of the collection is biographical.

This interest, however, by no means arises from internal evidence that the poems are autobiographical. In Emily Brontë's haunting poem "My Ancient Ship," composed in her twenty-first year, she makes her voyaging hero say,

> Memory! how thy magic fingers
> With a wild and passing thrill,
> Wake the chord whose spirit lingers,
> Sleeping silently and still,
> Fast asleep and almost dying,
> Through my days of changeless pain
> Till I dream these strings are lying,
> Never to be waked again.
> Winds have blown, but all unknown;
> Nothing could arouse a tone
> In that heart which like a stone
> Senselessly has lain.

But Emily Brontë's own heart it seems was not so heavy but that she could scribble gayly in a communicative and humorous outburst along the margin of "My Ancient Ship."

"I am more terrifically and infernally and idiotically *stupid*—than ever I was in the whole course of my incarnate existence. The above precious lines are the fruits of one hour's most agonizing labor between half past six and half past seven in the evening of July —, 1836."

The inclusion, in the edition, of this remark of

Emily's may perform a needed service to Letters, in aiding to clear that dull literary muddle in which the Brontës' lives are read into their work, and their work into their lives, until neither has any distinct or integral value.

"The personal position of the three sisters," as Henry James has acutely observed, "of the two in particular, had been marked with so sharp an accent that this accent has become for us the very tone of their united production. It covers and supplants their spirit, their style, their talent, their taste. . . . Literature is an objective, a projected result; it is life that is the unconscious, the agitated, the struggling, floundering cause. But the fashion has been, in looking at the Brontës so to confuse the cause with the result that we cease to know, in the presence of such ecstasies, what we have hold of or what we are talking about. They represent the ecstasies, the high-water mark of sentimental judgment."

While it is true that life gave the Brontës a deep knowledge of sadness, it must be remembered that melancholy was the conventional, poetical mood of the day—the day of the vogue of weeping willow trees, and of a species of satisfaction in being deserted, when even a person as

devoted to inconstancy by nature, and it may almost be said by principle, as Lord Byron wrote in the literary temper of

> Though human, thou didst not deceive me,
> Though woman, thou didst not forsake,
> Though loved thou forborest to grieve me—

Do you believe Charlotte Brontë says in "Frances":

> Unloved, I love; unwept, I weep:
> Grief I restrain, hope I repress;
> Vain is this anguish—fixed and deep;
> Vainer, desires and dreams of bliss

because she was unloved and unwept in anguish? No more than Shakspere wrote:

> Farewell, a long farewell to all my greatness—

because he had just lost an archbishopric; or than Mr. Sargent painted "Carmencita" because he had been carrying a fan and dancing the *cachucha.*

Charlotte's verses have a few, a very few fine moments, and a distant family resemblance to poetry. Branwell's verses have for me no interest whatever but the signature of a brother of the Brontës. The distinct, poetical endowment is Emily's and Anne's. The younger sister's

contribution is very slight—much of it merely formal, merely pietistic. But in other instances, infinitely touching and genuinely religious, the material of her poetry is the very stuff of the music dreams are made of, the mystery, the inexplicable deep sympathies of life. The most vivid element of the book is, of course, the poetry of Emily.

Though in "Brontë Poems" the two heretofore unpublished selections disentangled from the difficult manuscript of her notebook are characteristic; and the whole text of her work is in this edition, in my view, more sympathetically arranged than in the collection devoted exclusively to her own production, yet this collection, published by Hodder and Stoughton, and edited by Sir Robertson Nicoll and Clement Shorter, is naturally, more completely representative.

Emily Brontë's poetry, full of the profound charm of the shadowed things of life, like the stormy twilight she so often evokes for us, echoes with the

> Wild words of an ancient song,
> Undefined, without a name.

The beauty of the rain, the cold, the ways of nature that have no benison for man, she was one

of the first to express. The acute sweetness of that song has been too little appreciated. She has suffered too untempered a fame, for one whose phrase, like Shakspere's, has the rich power that swings with a full movement through both the passions and dearnesses of existence—

> Redbreast early in the morning
> Dark and cold and cloudy gray,
> Wildly tender is thy music
> Chasing angry thought away.

Pain, bereavement, defeat, freedom and imprisonment, the prospect of death, a fast allegiance with suffering, the love of dumb creatures, the passion of human justice, the inmost life, the will's life, the intensest forces of meditation—she says them all. Some of her expression is clumsy, her rhyme weak and forced, but the root of the music that speaks inarticulately is always there, the communicative power of tonal design, though often only roughly sketched. On every page, something beckons, something gleams; plunging horse hoofs gallop in the distance; a great light splinters on the point of a Valkyrie's spear, and deep in the reader's soul, the splendor of a woman's voice calls out through the ride down the mountain tops.

One is glad to see the heroic fragments, and the unheroic, the unfinished designs, the book includes—too many, and of too many kinds to tell in detail. Death arrested the designer's hand—that yet left behind it the earnest of immortality, the very proof as it were of the truth of one of her most stirring and beautiful stanzas.

> Nature's deep being thine shall hold,
> Her spirit all thy spirit fold,
> Her breath absorb thy sighs.
> Mortal! though soon life's tale is told;
> Who once lives, never dies!

SHELLEY IN HIS LETTERS

That light whose smile kindles the universe,
That beauty in which all things work and move,
That benediction which the eclipsing curse
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining love
Which, through the web of being blindly wove
By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
The fire for which all thirst, now beams on me,
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

This stanza of "Adonais" will recur often to the reader of the contradictions and the complications of Shelley's life, as these are revealed in his fascinating correspondence.

Without strength to hold up for long at a time the magnificent torch of his belief that human love is the light that kindles the beauty of creation, Shelley could yet wave the wild gleam of that flame with a free grace which will long waylay mankind's imagination. He waves it in his extremely candid and vital letters as expressively as in his verse; for me, in general, more expressively. Few of his admirers, I be-

lieve, will deny that the stuff of Shelley's poetry is more sympathetically communicated in his correspondence with Claire Clairmont alone, or Thomas Love Peacock, or Hogg, or Byron alone, than in "Julian and Maddalo," "Rosalind and Helen," and all his controversial verse put together.

Absorbing as it is to follow the gusty flame of the poet's torch of creative thought through the labyrinths of mortal life where he leads us, it must be confessed that in the course of the two volumes of the recent Bohn collection, edited by Roger Ingpen, I often forgot to look at the divine fire in my interest in the endlessly wonderful scene of human figures which that light chances to illuminate.

Lord Byron, Claire Clairmont, John Keats, Leigh Hunt, Godwin, Mary Shelley, the gifted Mrs. Boinville—never was a poet's biography more fully peopled than Shelley's with men and women of brilliant endowment and striking character. This element of the interest commonly attributed to novels, and so sadly to seek in numbers of them, is greatly enhanced by quotations from Peacock's "Memoir," from Mrs. Shelley's prefatory notes accompanying the first collected

edition of her husband's poems, and from various sources as well as by the addition of letters heretofore unpublished, or only privately published.

Time has walked past the day of apologies for Shelley, and of defamations. Time has put these in his fabular bag; and at last has given us a book void alike of Jeaffrean malice, and of Professor Dowden's excessive zeal in partisanship —a book of amazing and convincing spiritual portraits. This is not the place for comment on the wonderful tale we may find here of Shelley's relations to men and women, beyond the remark that few of its readers will be found to deny its power as a human document. "I couldn't skip a word of it," cried a friend, "I read even the letters to the money-lenders."

About poetry, *qua* poetry, perhaps the most curious and arresting observation one will have to make on the topic as presented in these two volumes is that Shelley seems to have paid on the whole very little attention to it. The fluent and voluminous expression of an ardent mind, a delightful resource, a natural exercise, Shelley's poetry—and by this I mean his writing of poetry —was never with him an absorbing obsession. He could never have averred for himself Pope's

saying, "For me, poetry has ever been less a pursuit than a passion." Keats' few words on poetry, in his distinguished letter to the "beautiful and ineffectual angel," outweigh in force and dignity anything presented on the subject by his generous admirer. Shelley writes to Peacock:

"I consider poetry very subordinate to moral and political science, and if I were well, certainly I would aspire to the latter; for I can conceive a great work, embodying the discoveries of all ages, and harmonizing the contending creeds by which mankind have been ruled. Far from me is such an attempt, and I shall be content, by exercising my fancy to amuse myself, and perhaps some others, and cast what weight I can into the scale of the balance which the Giant of Arthegall holds."

The *Giant of Arthegall,* one is asked to remember, is that defeated hero and lover of justice in the "Faerie Queene," who is knocked into the sea by mere brute power. And it is on record that Shelley once said beautifully, to the "forceful" author of

> The mountain sheep were sweeter,
> But the valley sheep were fatter—

"I am of the Giant's faction."

Too little concerned with poetry as an art, Shelley can yet hardly say a word about it without revealing the grace of a great nature, nobly indifferent to the mere question of career, modest and impersonal concerning his own achievements, very splendidly occupied with the eternal verities. Shelley is indeed too modest by far concerning his own achievements; and yet you would not have him in this respect other than he was.

You will go back again after you have read the letters, and read the poetry: and you will agree with Shelley that "Adonais" is his greatest work; and look with his vision on the vibrant light and cloud-swept way of our mortal lives through cosmos. The charm of reading his verse will be re-created for you by the fine pleasure of reading the correspondence of one of the world's greatest letter writers.

These volumes have another haunting beauty, the beauty of a way of human intercourse which has now all but disappeared. Deserted for the short cuts of telegrams and telephones and the trails of an earth compressed by innumerable conveniences of travel and information, the old

great highway of vitally expressive correspondence has been almost overgrown. About it breathes the air surrounding yellow cave cliffs, classic plinths and Theocritean idyls, the air of something vanished but immemorial. As an admirer closing the book exclaimed, "No one will ever write such letters again!"

SHELLEY'S FRIENDSHIPS WITH WOMEN

I

When Percy Shelley was twenty years of age and his wife, Harriet, seventeen, she wrote in a long, talkative letter to Miss Catherine Nugent at Dublin:

"Our friend, Miss Hitchener, is come to us. She is very busy writing for the good of mankind. She is very dark in complexion with a great quantity of long black hair. She talks a great deal. . . . Miss Hitchener has read your letter and loves you in good earnest—her own expression. I know you would love her did you know her. Her age is thirty. She looks like as if she was only twenty-four and her spirits are excellent. She laughs and talks and writes all day."

After a hundred years of controversy the tumult and the shouting die. The smoke of battle between the champions and the enemies of Shelley clears. In the ensuing lucidity, as we

read over the thousand and one tales that are told in the fascinating correspondence of Shelley's brilliant companions through the world, our first sensation is one of surprise at the childish outline and expression of many of the faces that look forth at us. It is with a start that we realize that Harriet Westbrook was sixteen, and Shelley nineteen, when they ran away together—that Shelley was twenty-two and Mary Godwin seventeen and Claire Clairmont sixteen, when he ran away again, on the six weeks' tour of the continent.

Twenty is an early age for setting forth to relieve the sufferings of women and start them on the paths of mental independence. But even before the noble and absurd young Shelley had invited Miss Hitchener to live with himself and his young wife forever, and rashly written to her, "I rejoice to think that you, my dearest friend, will speedily be our eternal inmate," he had started on an expedition as the counselor and champion of women which was to be lifelong.

To him, even from very early years, woman appeared in the character of a prisoner of civilization. It was his lot to attempt to free her.

His pitiful and wild mistakes in his task have engaged the attention of his biographers more than the nature of his effort. Inflammable, helpless, singularly without penetration into human character, or self-knowledge, perhaps no man was ever less fitted to be a wise liberator of the souls of women than Percy Bysshe Shelley. But this effort was his destiny. His encounters with life on behalf of women and thus with women themselves filled, darkened and changed his entire existence. He was the tireless and struggling servant of their betterment. He was their fickle deserter. He was their noble brother and their ignoble victim and creature. The tale of a defenseless defender, his biography as seen in this light will leave few readers unmoved, from his courageous letter at twenty to Sir James Lawrence, the Knight of Malta, in which he reproaches society for the custom of prostitution, to the day when Trelawney had to bring the news of his death to the three stricken women of his household at Casa Magni.

It is the biography of a human being who must be respected for his noble view of the powers of women.

II

When Shelley was seventeen he had fallen in love with his young cousin Harriet Grove, whom he had known from childhood. "But," as her brother the Reverend Henry Grove tells us, "she became uneasy at the tone of his letters on speculative subjects. . . . This led at last to the dissolution of an engagement between Bysshe and my sister which had been previously permitted both by his father and mine."

Harriet Grove married a Mr. Heylar who seems not to have cared about what young Shelley grandly describes as "co-incidence of intellect." But even in his misery at his loss, he has something to say about the future of her mind. Funny and piteous as his words are, they could scarcely have been written by a creature with a small or mean conception of women.

"She is gone! She is lost to me forever! She married! Married to a clod of earth; she will become insensible herself; all these fine capabilities will molder!" And he is much concerned at nineteen about the educational opportunities of his belovèd sister Elizabeth, now

cut off from him by Sir Timothy Shelley who feared the influence of his son's religious disbelief upon her and her mother. "My sister does not come to town, nor will she ever, at least I can see no chance of it. I will not deceive myself; she is lost, lost to everything. Intolerance has tainted her—she talks cant and twaddle." And he is worried about the effect of superstition upon Lady Shelley, too. "A mother who is mild and tolerant, yet narrow-minded," the unfortunate boy exclaims to his friend Hogg, "how, I ask, *is she* to be rescued!"

He could not indeed rescue any of them—not his sister, nor his mother, nor his cousin. They cared nothing for liberal ideas: and he could rescue only his unhappy little friend Harriet Westbrook, the beautiful daughter of a rich wine merchant, who continued to receive his calls and letters after he and Hogg were expelled from Oxford for refusing to assert their belief in the Christian religion—continued after she was ostracized for her conduct in her fashionable boarding school at Clapham where "her school fellows will not even reply to her questions; she is called an *abandoned wretch,* and

universally hated, which she remunerates with the calmest contempt."

After she had gone home from these difficulties, Mr. Westbrook insisted on Harriet's return to school. Shelley attempted to mollify Mr. Westbrook's demand. As this failed, he advised Harriet to resist her father. At this she wrote that resistance was useless; but that she loved him; and cast herself on his protection. He came to her in London whence he took her away helplessly to Scotland, and married her. "Gratitude and admiration," he wrote to Hogg, "all demand that I should love her *forever.*" It was a word that had no terrors for him. He feared it no more than the term "eternal" which he employed in asking Elizabeth Hitchener to live under his roof.

She was a schoolmistress whom he had met the year before at his uncle's house at Cuckfield, and of whom he wrote to Godwin that she was a person who had "contracted, during youth, a very deep and refined habit of thinking; her mind, naturally inquisitive and penetrating, overstepped the bounds of prejudice."

The occasion of his pressing invitation to this lady to share his and Harriet's future was

the fact that she had been subjected to a considerable mean annoyance and petty persecution in her neighborhood because of her continued correspondence with an atheist. After all these generous if ill-advised preliminaries of a long acquaintanceship, it is too sad to find that poor Miss Hitchener quarreled with the entire household; and that her Republicanism was a most deceptive profession of faith. But she had been as brave as Shelley. She had given up her school. She had cast her all upon the singular adventure which he proposed for her future. He promised her a hundred pounds a year to settle her in founding a new school: and she went out of the life of her quixotic friend; and taught again in Sussex; and married an Austrian officer and we hear of her no more. Shelley wrote of her to Hogg in terms of the meanest opprobrium: and the entire episode showed at once the best and the poorest qualities of his strange and wild soul—his power of attacking a difficult situation boldly in the interest of a prisoner of civilization, and his fickleness.

It is the first striking instance we possess of a singular and grave ungenerosity of his nature.

Being an idealist and not given to looking closely at the facts of character and personality, once life shattered the false image of a woman —or a man indeed, though this is outside our account—that Shelley had erected, like many another follower of romance he unjustly blamed the original. It was not precisely that he expected perfection of woman in the type in which nature had created her. He made an even less reasonable demand. He expected her to conform to a vision purely arbitrary, and barely related by some chance physical likeness to the real human being before him. When some chance shaft of light revealed irrevocably to him that she was not the creature of his fanciful conception, he had done with her.

It was thus that he dropped out of his consciousness Harriet Grove, and his sister Elizabeth, and his mother, and Elizabeth Hitchener, and, later, Emilia Viviani: and thus that he was to forget and begin to ignore Harriet Shelley when she became, as Hogg tells us, "interested in hats."

It is not the purpose of this commentary to detail the well-known events of Shelley's bitter history of the next few years, through his sepa-

ration from Harriet, and his elopement with Mary Godwin, and poor Harriet's self-destruction a year and a half later, after an entanglement of hers with some person unknown.

But now that we can see so plainly that Shelley was neither the infallibly praiseworthy knight of Dowden's scholarly history, nor the facile sensualist presented by his defamers, nor yet that merely quiet, unworldly and fanciful English gentleman described for us by his wife's devoted plausibility, we may find in this crucial passage of his life many elements heretofore omitted.

III

In the first place, Shelley's connection with Godwin's household was by no means exclusively formed of his passion for Mary Godwin. He was devoted to Godwin. He wrote long letters to his eldest stepdaughter, poor Fanny Imlay. He was the firm friend of his youngest stepdaughter, Claire Clairmont. Indeed he had cause for his devotion to Godwin: and if, as Mr. Brailsford has pointed out, Shelley paid Godwin's debts, Godwin's "Political Justice" supplied Shelley with the entire social

philosophy of most of his longer poems—not only with their main conceptions, but often, even, with lesser ideas.

Mrs. Godwin says that Fanny, Mary and Claire all fell in love with Shelley: and if this statement contains some falsehood it also probably contains some truth. Looking back at them as they appear in the Ingpen collection of letters they will all seem to us helpless young creatures together. Undoubtedly Shelley desired to rescue them all; and was fascinated by them all, and fascinated, too, by Godwin's house and its atmosphere of liberal ideas, in spite of its shabbiness and its dreadful blight of poverty. Godwin was even then a broken man. The affairs of his publishing house were failing. Duns were pursuing him. He had already begun that cringing, that hypocritical subservience to the world, and offensive readiness to do anything for money, that make one wish to avert one's eyes from the end of his career. But there must have been something to repay friendship in the man whose conversation Lamb and Hazlitt sought and loved to the end of his days.

Godwin's household was composed of himself

and his second wife, who had formerly been a Mrs. Clairmont, and five children. These were Fanny Imlay, the daughter of Godwin's first wife, Mary Wollstonecraft, through her earlier irregular and tragic union with an American, Gilbert Imlay; Mary Godwin, the child of his own happy marriage with Mary Wollstonecraft; Charles and Claire Clairmont, the children of his second wife's first marriage; and William Godwin, the son of his second marriage.

They were all lively and clever children—almost uncannily precocious, and entering into adult life, tea-drinking, the society of their father's contemporaries, and the delightful practice of filling the boxes his friends gave him at the Drury Lane Theater, at ages which seem to us very tender.

Aaron Burr, visiting the Godwins when Claire Clairmont was fourteen, complained that when she made the tea it was so strong it kept him awake all night. But in spite of her impetuous customs in tea making, from his first meeting with them he was charmed by all the children, especially the little girls, to whom he refers in his journal as "the three goddesses."

"*Feb. 15, 1812.* Had only time to get to Godwin's where we dined. In the evening, William the only son of William Godwin, a lad of about nine years old, gave his weekly lecture; having heard how Coleridge lectured he would also lecture, and one of his sisters (Mary I think) writes a lecture which he reads from a little pulpit which they have erected for him. He went through it with great gravity and decorum. The subject was 'The Influence of Government on the Character of a People.' After the lecture we had tea and the girls danced and sang an hour, and I came home."

The most striking of these children was Claire, sixteen at the time of Shelley's first intimacy, though not his first visit, in her father's household. Professor Dowden says she was "a dark-haired, dark-eyed, olive-cheeked girl, quick to observe, to think, to feel; of brilliant talents; ardent, witty, wilful; a lover of music and poetry, and gifted with an exquisite voice for song."

In this girl, dancing with her sisters and singing with a voice "like a string of pearls," Shelley was to meet the woman destined to reflect to the world an especially beautiful radi-

ance of his singular spirit, his peculiar genius. From the beginning we feel in her presence an individual charm. Even in the darkest, the meanest, the most violent passages of life from which her face looks out upon the reader of the Shelley and Byron letters, she reveals a certain attaching quality. Her mother worshiped, and spoiled her. Fanny Imlay doted on her. Afterwards, in her most outlawed and poverty-stricken years of social disapproval, men of standing repeatedly wished to marry her. In her later life persons in whose houses she stayed as a governess were devoted to her; her old pupils loved her. Fletcher says that on his deathbed at Missolonghi, Byron spoke her name, and desired in some phrase, never to be understood, that some kindness be done her. Shelley remembered her in his will with a double benefaction, and beyond everyone except his natural inheritors. The Ingpen collection of letters tells us that in Florence, and in Paris, the two cities where she spent a large part of her career, she was long remembered and admired after her death at eighty-one, for her generosities. There is no striking, superficial reason for these testimonies. Her fortunes were never very fine.

Her life and her nature were full of fault and of error. It is the story of a person of natural power and deeply endearing.

Shelley's closer acquaintaince with Godwin's family, including this remarkable girl, began in June. On the 28th of July he eloped to the continent with Mary and Claire. Much surprise has been expressed that Claire was the companion of this proceeding; and also that Shelley soon wrote from abroad urging Harriet to join them. Those who have read his correspondence unaided by the interpretation of Mary or her partisans would, I believe, not have been astonished if the admiring youth had been accompanied by all four of his young friends, by Harriet and Fanny as well as by Mary and Claire. Never was a creature less single or more single-minded in his attachments. Remote from the ideal of our convention in these matters as his instincts were, it seems undeniable that he honestly cared for them all; that it was no part of his intention to cut himself off from Harriet completely; and that even in his first passion for Mary he was somewhat dismayed by her eager claimancy, somewhat alarmed, as he well may have been, by their project of a continental

tour; and that, at the hour of departure, he clung to Claire in a kind of terror.

Mary, it appears, had long before their departure flung herself upon him at her mother's grave; had told him she was dying of love for him, and urged that he and she and Harriet might all live together, Harriet as his sister, she as his wife.

It is true that this tale, as told to Harriet by Shelley, comes to us from a letter of Harriet's. But when one meets in Mary Shelley's journal after she is thirty exactly the same somewhat estranging effect in her manner of a species of calculated passion, one believes Harriet's story. Mary was a child at the time of the continental journey. She was seventeen. But she was nevertheless, I think, a maturer person than Shelley: and it is my own belief that far from snatching her away as an innocent victim from her father's house, he was snatched by her: and that in the next years her endless doubts and questions of him, her endless jealousy and hatred and his poor subservience to it were a far more potent cause of his total failure to protect Harriet than his own natural desire in regard to

providing for her, or than any one's belief in free union.

By inducing Claire to be their companion in an expedition which was to blacken in England the names of all those who shared in it, Shelley and Mary incurred a responsibility which Shelley felt keenly till the end of his life. Of all the women of his acquaintance she seems to have been the only one concerning whom at the outset he possessed no illusions. Her faults—her quick temper, her moodiness and sensitiveness to offense were on her sleeve. She writes of them penitently in her journal at sixteen; and of Shelley's "explanations" with her; and "tells," as Dowden says, "how she hates her own bitterness and likes good, kind, explaining people."

After the return to England she seems to have gone back and forth between Godwin's establishment and Shelley's in the next year, incurring violent disapproval in her stepfather's house for her championship of Shelley and Mary, and pursued by the suspicion and disparagement of Mary who was at once dependent on her for society, willing to make use of her and fearful of any kindness to her on Shelley's part.

"Pray, is Clara with you?" Mary writes, on the anniversary of their elopement at a time when Shelley is away from her, hunting a house in Devon: and Mrs. Godwin has planned to induce Claire to lodge with an acquaintance of hers of whom we are to hear later—Mrs. Knapp: "For I have inquired several times, and no letters; but, seriously, it would not in the last surprise me (if you have written to her from London, and let her know that you are without me) that she should have taken some such freak." Her letter continues with complaints of her headaches and her tears and "Dearest, best Shelley, pray come to me; pray, pray, do not stay away from me! . . . I most earnestly and with tearful eyes beg that I may come to you, if you do not like to leave the searches after a house."

At this one asks: Was Shelley in love with Claire Clairmont? Everyone must believe what he will from the testimony of the letters. It is my own conviction that he loved her dearly, faults and all; and that she loved him dearly, faults and all, too; that he was her faithful ally, as well as her wild but responsible guide; that she taught him more than any other crea-

ture he ever knew; but that he was never in love with her, nor she with him.

I suppose it must be admitted that such was the susceptibility of Shelley's temper, and such the remarkable inexclusiveness of the nature of man, that very probably—especially as he had persuaded himself and been persuaded by Mary that there was no virtue in an exclusive fidelity to earlier ties—if Claire had flung herself upon him during his house-hunting, and told him she was helpless, and dying of love for him, as Mary had done, and Harriet before her, he might very likely have run away with her, too. Those who will must infuriate themselves over this possibility; or repudiate it as a miserable slander on the youthful Shelley, and on the strength of the masculine character. But Claire was of a very different spirit from Mary and Harriet, as we may learn by a letter from her to Fanny Imlay written at this very period from Lynmouth.

She was seventeen. She was alone. It would appear that her fortunes were far from easy. But she certainly makes no tearful demands.

"My Dear Fanny:

"Mary writes me that you thought me unkind

in not letting you know before my departure; indeed, I meant no unkindness, but I was afraid if I told you that it might prevent my putting a plan into execution which I preferred before all the Mrs. Knapps in the world.

"Here I am at liberty; there I should have been under a perpetual restrain. Mrs. Knapp is a forward, impertinent, superficial woman. Here there are none such; a few cottages, with little rosy-faced children, scolding wives and drunken husbands. I wish I had a more amiable and romantic picture to present to you, such as shepherds and shepherdesses, flocks and madrigals; but this is the truth, and the truth is best at all times. I live in a little cottage, with jasmine and honey-suckle twining over the window; a little down-hill garden full of roses, with a sweet arbor.

". . . You told me you did not think I should ever be able to live alone. If you knew my constant tranquillity, how cheerful and gay I am, perhaps you would alter your opinion. After so much discontent, such violent scenes, such a turmoil of passion and hatred you will hardly believe how enraptured I am with this dear little

quiet spot. I am as happy when I go to bed as when I rise. . . .

"I was quite delighted to hear that Papa had at last got £1000. Riches seem to fly from genius. I suppose for a month or two you will be easy. . . .

"I feel anxious to be wise; to be capable of knowing the best; of following resolutely, however painful, what mature and serious thought may prescribe; and of acquiring a prompt and vigorous judgment, and powers capable of execution. . . .

"How is dear Willy? How is everyone? . . . The moon shines in at my window, there is a roar of waters, and the owls are hooting. How often do I not wish for a curfew!—'swinging slow with sullen roar!' Pray write to me, do, there's a good Fanny.

"Affectionately yours,

"CLAIRE."

The next winter seems to have found Claire in London. At this period Lord Byron, recently parted from his wife, was one of the patrons of the Drury Lane Theater. Claire applied to him

for an engagement, apparently in connection with her singing. She seems never to have appeared upon the stage. Her meeting with Byron resulted in the deepest of human intimacies. She was a girl of seventeen—poor and unknown. But, says Dowden, "she had a beauty and a brilliance of her own: and why should a man of genius set bounds to his triumphs? To Claire the rapture was a blinding one—to know herself beloved of the most extraordinary genius, the highest singer, the most romantic and most famous person of the time."

In the spring, Byron formed a plan for meeting her abroad; but insisted that she was not to come unattended. She persuaded Shelley and Mary, both in complete ignorance of her affair with Byron, to go with her to Lake Geneva where Byron joined them. He and Shelley had been in correspondence before concerning "Queen Mab" but they had not met till this occasion. Here in the environs of Geneva they spent the summer which has become celebrated in Letters when Byron wrote the third canto of "Childe Harold," and heard how

> Far along
> From peak to peak the rattling crags among
> Leaps the live thunder.

and composed the "Prisoner of Chillon," and Shelley wrote the "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty,"

> Thy light alone, like mist o'er mountains driven,
> Or music by the night wind sent
> Through strings of some still instrument,
> Or moonlight on a midnight stream,
> Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream,

and Mary Shelley planned "Frankenstein."

At what period Shelley and Mary learned of the character of Byron's and Claire's attachment is not known. Allegra, the daughter of Claire and Byron, so christened in London when she was a year and a half old, was born in the following January at Bath, where Mary remained with Claire through this event. She was a beautiful, a fairy child: and from her birth and before it, her mother loved her as deeply as a child can be loved.

"Before we parted at Geneva," she says in a letter of later days, "he [Byron] talked over our situation; he proposed to place the child when born in Mrs. Leigh's [his sister's] care. To

this I objected on the ground that a child always wanted a parent's care at least till seven years old; rather than that, I would keep the child with me, though of course, for the child, there were great objections to that. He yielded, and said it was best it should live with him; he promised, faithfully promised, never to give it until seven years of age into a stranger's care."

According to this agreement, in the spring of 1818 Claire and her baby with Shelley and Mary and their two little children, William and Clara, journeyed to Italy chiefly for the purpose of conducting Allegra to her father.

Since their wonderful summer at Geneva much had happened to alter the relations of the companions of that more carefree season. Fanny Imlay had taken her own life. An incubus on the Godwins' poverty, when she was cut off by the sudden hardness of an aunt who had offered her a position in a girl's school only to withdraw it, she could bear existence no longer. She had no future, no outlook before her. This loss was to be followed soon by another, more shocking. In December, after Shelley had been attempting for some weeks to obtain news of his wife, he learned from Hook-

ham, his publisher, that a month before she had drowned herself in the Serpentine. She had formed another unhappy connection. She had been in despair. Peacock says that Shelley never recovered from the shock of her self-destruction.

The world will never know all the truth concerning these dark stories. It seems in some ways significant that after the death of Fanny Imlay and of Harriet, Shelley's concern for Claire and her beautiful little girl increased—as though he would not again err by a neglect of the prisoners of civilization, perhaps also in the common kindness that touches us all in the presence of death.

It is a singular circumstance that, whatever his fascination, whatever his brilliancy, whatever his phenomenal distinction and fame, Byron inspired no lasting devotion in the mothers of either of his children. The adored of the world of women, one upon whose entrance on a street in Coppet a lady of some sixty-five years fainted away from mere sensibility, he maintained no ascendency whatever either over Lady Byron or Claire Clairmont. Nothing is more curious or striking in the course of his intrigue

with Claire than the fact that after its first ecstasy was over, she seems to have detested him. Long afterwards she wrote to a friend, "I am unhappily the victim of a *happy passion.* I had one; like all things perfect of its kind, it was fleeting, and mine only lasted ten minutes, but these ten minutes have discomposed the rest of my life. The passion, God knows for what cause, from no fault of mine, however, disappeared, leaving no trace whatever behind it except my heart wasted and ruined as if it had been scorched by a thousand lightnings."

Undoubtedly one cause of the disappearance of her passion for Byron was her continued friendship with a man who was spiritually his superior. In the course of the past year, the birth of her child, the grief and pain she had seen in the households where she had lived, it is easy to understand how Byron's grandeur, his appearance in thunderstorms in the Alps, and his world-fame might all have seemed less to her than that imagination of the heart in Shelley upon which her sincere affection for him was founded.

It was Shelley who accompanied the little Allegra to her father in Venice. Byron had

made the hard provision that the separation between Claire and Allegra was to be final. As soon as Shelley heard this he besought Claire not to give up her little girl. But it was her belief that in this course she was acting for the best for the child's future.

"She was the only thing I had to love, the only object in the world I could call my very own," Claire wrote later of the Italian day of her first separation from Allegra, "and I had never parted from her from her birth not for an hour even. . . . I will say nothing as to what the parting cost me; but I felt that I ought not for the sake of gratifying my own affection to deprive her of a brilliant position in life."

IV

Byron contrived various more or less wise provisions for the little child, in the jungle of his existence. In the following fall, by the arrangement of Shelley, she and Claire spent a happy two months together. Then after her return there were numerous distracting rumors from the Hoppners, the English consul and his wife—that Byron was to permit a lady who desired this, to adopt Allegra; and that she suf-

fered from the cold in Venice: and that Byron meant to take her away to Ravenna with his mistress, the Countess Guiccioli, under whose authority the little girl might fare ill. In these circumstances Claire besought to have Allegra with her again in vain. Her fortune was a harsh one. Ill, frantic about Allegra, miserable in the Shelley household where Mary quarreled constantly with her, she wrote angry and unwise letters to Byron who answered her hatefully.

"I wonder," Shelley replied to him, "at your being provoked at what Claire writes, though that she should write what is provoking is very probable. You are conscious of performing your duty to Allegra, and your refusal to allow her to visit Claire at this distance you conceive to be part of that duty. That Claire should have wished to see her is natural. That her disappointment should vex her, and her vexation make her write absurdly is all in the usual order of things. But, poor thing, she is very unhappy, and in bad health, and she ought to be treated with as much indulgence as possible. The weak and the foolish are in this respect the kings—they can do no wrong."

It is a pity not to quote the whole of this letter in which Shelley urges and, it appears, obtains that tidings of Allegra's health be sent regularly to Claire at Pisa. She had here formed a warm friendship with a Lady Mountcashell, a bold and remarkable Irishwoman, beautiful, graceful, wise in many of the ways of the world. She had married the Earl of Mountcashell. She had long since left him. She had entered into an alliance which appears singular and rather creditable in social history. She lived an esteemed life, devoted to her two daughters and apparently well received in Pisa, in a free union with a Mr. Tighe, a high-minded and retiring gentleman who impressed everyone who met him with the distinction of his manner, his love of Letters and his understanding of character.

On this Meredithian lady's advice Claire left Mary's threshold. She became a governess in the household of Professor Botji, a Florentine gentleman. Shelley escorted her to her new duties, to a task henceforward to be hers until at last his generosity released her. His letters at this period are filled with sympathy for her—a stranger in an alien household, alone in the

world, her heart constrained with the pressure of her unappeased longing for Allegra.

"Keep up your spirit, my best girl, until we meet at Pisa. . . . You know, however, whatever you shall determine on, where to find one ever affectionate friend, to whom your absence is too painful for your return ever to be unwelcome."

The winter turned to spring, and another winter and another spring throbbed away into the blue of Italian skies, while Claire still longed for Allegra.

The Countess Guiccioli seems on the whole to have had a rather favorable effect upon Byron: and in Allegra's life at the Guiccioli Palace at Ravenna, we have pleasant reports in her father's letters to Murray and to Moore of the painting of her miniature, and of her watching the Carnival from his carriage. But, unfortunately, in the spring of 1821, feeling very reasonably that in her position she would have a harder future, a poorer chance of marriage if she received an English education than she might on the continent, he placed her in a convent at Bagnacavallo near Ravenna. It was on high ground. He believed it to be healthful

and safe. The place was dreaded by Claire from the first. In the summer, when Byron planned to go to Switzerland leaving the little girl at Bagnacavallo without any supervision from outside, Shelley joined in her protests at his unwisdom: and paid him a visit at Ravenna to talk with him about Allegra's future.

"I went the other day," he writes to Mary upon this occasion, "to see Allegra at her convent, and stayed with her about three hours. . . . The traits have become more delicate and she is much paler probably from the effect of improper food. She yet retains the beauty of her deep blue eyes and of her mouth, but she has a contemplative seriousness which, mixed with her excessive vivacity which has not yet deserted her, has a very peculiar effect in a child. . . . Her hair, scarcely darker than it was, is beautifully profuse, and hangs in large curls on her neck. She was prettily dressed in white muslin, and an apron of black silk with trousers. Her light and airy figure and her graceful motions were a striking contrast to the other children there. She seemed a thing of a finer and higher order. At first she was very shy, but after a little caressing, and especially

after I had given her a gold chain which I had bought at Ravenna for her, she grew more familiar, and led me all over the garden, and all over the convent, running and skipping so fast that I could hardly keep up with her . . . before I went away she made me run all over the convent, like a mad thing."

Who can help liking the Shelley who wrote this letter? Evidently Byron could not. He was so charmed by him that early in his visit he planned to follow his guest and to live near him at Pisa. There were gulfs of difference between the two men. But they knew more, they thought more, than any of their companions. It is curious to see that their interest in each other's conversation is so strong, that almost nothing can separate them from each other's company.

"I arrived last night at ten o'clock," says Shelley, "and sat up talking with Lord Byron until five this morning." It was indeed an absorbing visit: and as you read in the brilliant, the worldly-wise letters of Byron, so witty, so appreciative, in many ways understanding so much more than any of his contemporaries, his amusing and penetrating account of the sojourn of

the delightful Miss Edgeworth and her pompous father in London, you cannot wonder that Shelley could hear Lord Byron's conversation for seven hours at a stretch.

"Lord Byron has here splendid apartments in the house of his mistress' husband, who is one of the richest men in Italy. *She* is divorced with an allowance of 1,200 crowns a year. . . . *Tita* the Venetian is here, and operates as my valet; a fine fellow, with a prodigious black beard, and who has stabbed two or three people, and is one of the most good-natured-looking fellows I ever saw."

"Lord Byron," he says to Peacock, "is in excellent cue both of health and spirits. He has got rid of all those melancholy and degrading habits which he indulged at Venice. He lives with one woman, a lady of rank here, to whom he is attached and who is attached to him, and is in every respect an altered man. He has written three more cantos of 'Don Juan.' I have yet only heard the fifth, and I think that every word of it is pregnant with immortality. . . . Lord Byron gets up at *two.* I get up, quite contrary to my usual custom but one must sleep or die, like Southey's sea-snake in

'Kehama' at 12. After breakfast we sit talking till six. From six till eight we gallop through the pine forests which divide Ravenna from the sea; we then come home and dine, and sit up gossiping till six in the morning. I don't suppose this will kill me in a week or fortnight, but I shall not try it longer. Lord B.'s establishment consists, besides servants, of ten horses, eight enormous dogs, three monkeys, five cats, an eagle, a crow and a falcon; and all these except the horses walk about the house, which every now and then resounds with their unarbitrated quarrels, as if they were the masters of it. . . .

"P. S. After I have sealed my letter, I find that my enumeration of the animals in this Circean palace was defective, and that in a material point. I have just met on the grand staircase five pea-cocks, two guinea-hens, and an Egyptian crane. I wonder who all these animals were, before they changed into these shapes."

But Shelley could leave all this interesting scene to play three hours with the child of his friend, Claire; and to learn all the things about her that her mother longed to know. Politics, the future of radical thought in England, the

poetry of "Don Juan," his and his wife's and child's immediate purposes and their establishment in Italy could not crowd out of his soul his concern for the fortune of his beautiful little playmate. "Our first thought," he wrote to Mary, "ought to be Allegra, our second, our own plans."

Even in the midst of this visit Shelley learned of a shocking blow that had been struck at his household, under cover of his protection of Claire. A discharged maid and her husband, Elise and Paolo, had circulated and, indeed, caused the Hoppners to believe a story that Claire was his mistress, that he was the father of a child of hers whom he and Claire both mistreated and had cast off as a foundling; and that they both mistreated Mary. No part of Byron's history is more discreditable to him than his behavior towards this monstrous tale. He repeated it to Shelley as a matter of which Shelley must certainly disabuse the Hoppners. But he did not tell Shelley that he himself, Lord Byron, having received this story at a time when Claire was attempting to induce him not to place Allegra in the convent, had been capable of using Paolo's atrocious slanders against her

with the Hoppners in order to disparage and discredit all her wishes—nor that at this time he had practically indorsed what he must have known to be the malicious lie of a servant. Furthermore, there was another tangle in the intrigue of Paolo. The Hoppners, as Byron told Shelley, had exacted from him a promise he seems not to have hesitated to break, to the effect that he would not repeat Paolo's slander to his friend. But he did repeat it. Shelley wrote to Mary asking her to send a letter of denial to the Hoppners. On account of Bryon's broken promise to them Shelley thought it a delicacy that this letter of Mary's to them should be intrusted to Byron's hands.

At this juncture, in the presence of these base specters of suspicion and falsehood, Mary appears in the light of a truly noble and courageous figure. She wrote an absolutely convincing letter of denial. She stood by Claire. She stood by her husband. She thought and spoke wisely for all of their interests.

Without the faintest knowledge of Byron's earlier treachery in upholding Paolo in his lie to the Hoppners, Shelley gave him Mary's letter to them. The famous author of "Don Juan"

never delivered it. After his death it was found among his papers. The monstrous deceitfulness of his act has received from Professor Dowden the exposure and the detestation it richly deserves.

Why was he willing to stoop to such a miserable performance? I think it is only too plain that Byron's hardness against Claire is due partly to the fact that nothing on earth can make his behavior to her appear anything other than discreditable to him—a circumstance affronting to a person of his vanity; and partly to the fact that she was never blighted by him. Before she parted from him she had doubtless begun to perceive his feebler characteristics. It must be remembered that she had grown up among men of distinguished minds, if not of distinguished fortunes—Charles Lamb, Hazlitt, Godwin. She appears never to have been a fool about the qualities of men. Byron undoubtedly knew well the character of Shelley's and Claire's long attachment to each other. He hated it; he hated them both for it more than he could ever have hated any sensual intrigue, his own natural element. Claire's behavior towards himself, her relation with Shelley and his unro-

mantic, splendid and steadfast championship of her in her hardships were not only a criticism of Byron as a person, they were a hopelessly damaging reflection on Byronism, on the whole mass of sex illusion which floated the poorer end of his celebrity.

On his return from Ravenna Shelley had, however, achieved Byron's promise that he would not, on his departure for Pisa, leave Allegra at Bagnacavallo. But again Byron broke his word; and arrived at Pisa without her. In the meantime Claire, at Florence, had persuaded her friend in Pisa, Mr. Tighe, to make a journey to visit the convent. He returned with the gloomiest tidings. The convent was managed by nuns of a harsh order; the pupils were from the most poverty stricken families who demanded nothing for their children. There was no fire at the convent through the winter. Typhus fever from the marshes of the Romagna ravaged the neighborhood, and had more than once before crept into Bagnacavallo. Here was a heavy change from Shelley's summer story.

Distracted, Claire journeyed to Pisa to consult with Mary and Shelley. Immediately on her departure Shelley sought to have Allegra

removed from the convent, attempting to work upon Byron's feeling by describing her anxiety to him—with the most unfortunate result. We may learn something of it from a friend, a Miss Elizabeth Parker, then staying with Lady Mountcashell and present with her household at Casa Silva when Shelley described his interview.

"I never saw him in a passion before," said Miss Parker. "Last night however, he was downright, positively angry. . . . Mr. Shelley declared to Lady Mountcashell that he could with pleasure have knocked Lord Byron down; for when he mentioned that you were half-distracted with alarm about the child's health, and also that you were yourself in very declining health, he saw a gleam of malicious satisfaction pass over Lord Byron's countenance. 'I saw his look,' Mr. Shelley said, 'I understood the meaning; I despised him, and I came away.' . . . Afterwards he said, 'It is foolish of me to be angry with him; he can no more help being what he is than yonder door can help being a door.' "

Claire was beside herself at her inability to reach her little girl. She formed wild plans, frantic and vengeful plans, it appears from her

friends' replies and attempts to soothe her. She feared illness and neglect and cold for the child. "I was endeavoring," Shelley writes to her, "to induce him [Byron] to place Allegra in the institute at Lucca, but his jealousy of my regard for *your* interests will, since a conversation I had with him the other day, render him inaccessible to my suggestions. It seems to me that you have no other resources but time and change. . . . My spirits completely overcome me.

"Your ever faithful and affectionate,

"SHELLEY."

"Come and stay among us. If you like, come and look for houses with me in our boat."

She did come in April; she was persuaded to distract herself by joining the Shelleys' new-made friends, Captain Williams and his wife, on a journey to Spezzia, as Shelley says, to hunt for houses. She had hardly gone when Shelley and Mary received word from Byron that Allegra was dead. She had died, as her mother feared, of typhus fever.

It was resolved that the hard news be concealed from Claire as long as possible. As soon as she returned with the Williams to Pisa, with

the promise of one house at Spezzia, Shelley hurried them all back again. Casa Magni, the establishment the searchers had found, was a white house with arches, as Dowden tells us, in a cove on the Bay of Spezzia. It had once been a Jesuit convent. "The hoary mountain slopes; the waters, violet and green of the tideless Mediterranean, the deep southern sky, the fishers' black huts clinging below the little cliffs like swallows' nests; the lonely house almost amid the waves—made up a scene at once beautiful and strange." Here it was, in this house, in the wild beauty of this spot that Shelley told Claire of her child's death.

We learn that after her first outburst of despair she was very calm. She acquiesced in Byron's wish that Allegra be buried in England. He sent a message saying to her that everything should be ordered at her behest at the child's funeral. But she was too stunned to avail herself of this. He had desired that Allegra's grave be at Harrow in the church, as near as might be to an outlook over the open, beyond, where he himself had loved to sit in his own bitter childhood: and that this tablet be placed on the church wall beside her.

IN MEMORY OF
ALLEGRA
DAUGHTER OF G. G. LORD BYRON,
WHO DIED AT BAGNACAVALLO
IN ITALY APRIL 20TH, 1822,
AGED FIVE YEARS AND THREE MONTHS

"I shall go to her, but she shall not return to me."
2ND SAMUEL xii, 23.

Strange are the ways of fortune. In Italy, Byron's circle was dismayed by his unwisdom for Allegra. In England, his tenderness for the child would seem even after her death to have been resented. He who had dumbly thwarted so many wishes on his daughter's behalf was to be in the same manner denied his desire of a gentle and dignified commemoration for her, in the hard ways of the England of that day: and the tablet and words of affection he designed for her were never placed on the church wall at Harrow.

"The blow was stunning and unexpected," he writes Shelley of Allegra's death, "for I thought the danger over by the long interval between her stated amelioration and the arrival of the express. But I have borne up against it as I best can. . . . There is nothing to prevent your coming to-morrow; but perhaps, to-day

and yester-evening it was better not to have met. . . . I suppose that Time will do his usual work. Death has done his." Moore tells us that "in this day and yester-evening" Byron nearly lost his reason from shock and grief.

One may hope that perhaps few women are subjected to such miseries as Claire Clairmont had known. In these Shelley had sustained her and had seen her in her noblest and best moods and her most violent and unlovely manifestations. She had remained dear to him: and obviously she would always have remained dear to him. There is something honorable to the generosity and staunchness of human nature in the circumstance.

V

It will be recalled that Shelley had other friends among women than those we have enumerated; that in his sojourn at Pisa he passed through a species of infatuation for Emilia Viviani, a beautiful young Italian woman immured in a convent through the jealousy of her stepmother and afterwards married against her will. Mary and Claire seem to have fallen in

love with her too. "As it fell out they all fell in." And the poet's biography remains a little vague as to why they all fell so distinctly out of love with her later. Her avarice, it would appear, was a disaffecting element in their continuing acquaintance with this classically exquisite young woman—but even this is not certain. Suddenly her sufferings seem to be of less importance to them all. She is more and more of clay: and at last she is entirely earthborn; and they will have no more of her. She was the subject of "Epipsychidion," of which Shelley says to Gisborne in 1822:

"The 'Epipsychidion,' I cannot look at. The person whom it celebrates was a cloud instead of a *Juno;* and poor *Ixion* starts from the centaur that was the offspring of his own embrace. If you are curious, however, to hear what I am and have been, it will tell you something thereof. It is an idealized history of my life and feeling. I think one is always in love with something or other; the error, and I confess it is not easy for spirits cased in flesh and blood to avoid it, consists in seeking, in a mortal image the likeness of what is perhaps eternal."

The man who spoke so hatefully to Hogg, ten

years before, about his errors on the subject of Miss Elizabeth Hitchener is not to be found in the self-knowledge of this imaginative and interesting passage. It should, I think, be appended always to the lovely but somewhat dehumanized poem of its reference, as an editing by the author, his last word of emendation.

VI

There is something more to be said of Shelley's friendships with women. Among these was his pleasure in Jane Williams, the wife of Captain Williams, a pretty, courageous, and rather markedly unintellectual young woman who seems to have been a stay and resource in the sojourn at Casa Magni, darkened as it was by the shadow of Allegra's death, and some time afterwards by an illness of Mary's. This sickness left her melancholy and broken. On the occasion when Shelley and Captain Williams were in Pisa before their fatal voyage, Williams wrote to his wife: "A letter from Mary of the most gloomy kind reached Shelley yesterday, and this mood of hers aggravated my uneasiness to see you: . . . This is our longest separation. Absence alone is enough to make me anxious and

indeed unhappy; but I think if I had left you in our own house in solitude, I should feel it less than I do now. What can I do? Poor Shelley desires that I should return to you, but I know secretly wishes me not to leave him in the lurch. He too, by his manner, is as anxious to see you almost as I could be. . . ."

It was the last letter Williams ever wrote to his wife. On his and Shelley's homeward voyage in the fated *Ariel* they were lost. After days of hopeless waiting Trelawney bore to Mary, Claire, and Jane Williams at Casa Magni the terrible news of the end.

Of these three women Jane was the only one who ever rallied from the searing griefs and losses of that cruel summer and spring. She was the lightest spirit among them. It was her fortune after some years to marry Shelley's early friend, Hogg, a person more learned, more brilliant, of more intellect and position, and yet in most respects less of a man, than Williams. Hogg had been a lover of Harriet's, if one may dignify by that title anyone who loved publication beyond every human tie. Under Hogg's influence Jane Williams, then Mrs. Hogg, spread abroad a tale that wounded Mrs. Shelley to the

quick. Mrs. Hogg asserted, or unmistakably implied, that Shelley had been in love with herself before his death. Pretending to be the friend of Mary she was yet willing to launch a complacent narrative to this effect, doubtless more in consonance with her own vanity and Hogg's interpretation, than with truth.

The reference of Captain Williams' last letter to Shelley could scarcely have been made even by the dullest of husbands to a man in a passion for his wife; and in the annals of Shelley's admiration of women Mrs. Hogg presents the silly countenance of one who far preferred the poor name of an unworthy infatuation to the credit of a sound friendship.

Nevertheless, we can ill spare the episode of her behavior towards Shelley's liking of her, for it is one of the great merits, what may be called a bracing, moral value of Shelley's biography, as one reads it in his correspondence with his friends, that he was constantly encountering miserable creatures and even acting like one himself. So that one may derive lessons from him, and from those about him, not to be found in tales of heroes. He was surrounded by the mean, and the non-humorous, and unimaginative,

and the greedy, and the silly of both sexes. Doubtless there are many such among the prisoners of civilization. It is one of the generous illusions of youth to suppose instinctively that all sufferers and all the oppressed are noble. The persistency of this great and natural fallacy is not peculiar to Shelley—nor is a consequent and too complacent fickleness when the illusion is broken. It is only yesterday that I heard a lady commenting, with the sense of outrage of one betrayed, on the fact that disagreeable persons and individuals with imperfect standards of morality were to be found among the Belgians.

Walt Whitman tells us he has stood up for the stupid and the crazy. But he does not tell us how. To do this, without standing up for their craziness or their stupidity; and to obtain from a few companions through existence the same mercy for oneself in one's own poorest unreasons and blindnesses sometimes seems to constitute the deepest value of one's life. Certainly some of the best wisdoms of the race are the result of faith and courage in such an effort: and to its endeavor Shelley was a lifelong contributor, one might almost say a slave.

His formal utterances on the subject of human society must always remain for many readers too vague, and in general have less of the divine fire than the sparks he hits out in battering prejudice on his course through existence.

"What has become of them all?" you think, as you turn back to life from the letters of Shelley's circle. More than those of any other group presented chiefly in personal correspondence, that I can recall, their characters stand out as though rendered for us by the hand of some master of fiction. We follow their fortunes with the interest we feel in the history of "David Copperfield," or Daudet's "Sappho." They become so vivid to us that we look back on those carefree evenings of Aaron Burr's description, when little William read his lecture on "The Influence of Government on the Character of a People," and "the girls danced and sang an hour," with that humbled sense of sudden tears and amusement one experiences in the quick poetry of some actual human memory. This vividness, this salience of the persons of the Shelley and Byron correspondence is chiefly because the letter writers had nearly all of them a certain native expressiveness. But it is partly

for another reason. One, at least, of the tales we follow—that of the tragedy of Allegra and Claire—is a great human story. It has the grand manner of the last simplicity. It has an elemental appeal to the sympathies common to all mankind. Allegra is of those beautiful children of fable who are drowned in the waves of the passions of men and women. She haunts the imagination like the Princes in the Tower, like the slain children of Medea, and the far-off voice of young Itylus dead.

"Who has remembered me—who has forgotten?"

And in her mother's longing for her there is the tone of an emotion infinitely stirring, truly deep as the sea.

As the helper by the wayside in Claire's and Allegra's journey through a base world, Shelley appears in the light of a distinction especially noble. Immemorially the world has driven Hagar and Ishmael into the desert. Shelley was, I think, the first brother of mankind to go forth with the grace of a natural sympathy as their fellow traveler. Others have exhorted these outcasts. But he was better than their exhorter. He was their companion.

Trelawney tells us that when Shelley's drowned body was found and placed upon a pyre upon the coast at Massa, Byron could not face the scene. He withdrew to the beach and swam off to the *Bolivar,* his vessel in which he had been searching for the victims of the lost *Ariel.* Leigh Hunt remained in his carriage. Only Trelawney waited through the final rites beside the ashes of the dead poet he had loved so well. "But what surprised us all," he says, "was that the heart remained entire."

It had held long, of course, the fatal waters of the ocean. But the circumstance may well serve us as a symbol. After a hundred years, as we read now the letters of the dead men and women who lived and loved and suffered in his presence, many a strange wind of doctrine, many a vanished fashion of thought and speech sings to us with beauty across their thrilling histories.

They are lost and gone forever in their home beyond the sea—
They are lost and gone forever, far away—yes, far away—

But the heart of Shelley has lived unconsumed in the ashes.

ARMS AND INDUSTRY

BEFORE you have finished the first chapter or the first ten pages of "Arms and Industry" you will have perceived that you are in the presence of a distinguished power of creating and expressing an important idea—the presence of a great book.

Ever since the beginning of the European War, who has not heard among his acquaintances the frequent mention of a subject seldom touched upon before, the topic of the plans that determine the governmental contracts of the nations of the globe? In the last years one will have felt increasingly in oneself, and have noticed in others, the desire for clear and cosmopolitan information on that topic, information not in any degree partisan, or nationalized, or emotional. Here is such a book.

"He had not in his mind," Henry James says of Turgenev, "a grain of prejudice as large as the point of a needle." The observation might

be repeated of the mental tone of "Arms and Industry." In reading it one experiences the fine clarification to be derived from all contemplative writing characterized by an ennobling and absolute candor. In the midst of present printed utterances about war, one may find in its pages a large and certain sanctuary.

Irrespective of the ideas the book voices, this is a high qualification. There are moments when one desires above all else in a book the air of a great-vaulted cloister. Who will write a still book, without a dull word? Only very few authors. But these will charm their readers to the end of time. It is noticeable, too, that such writers may fascinate almost without a grace of style. Open the door. Sit down for a quiet hour. You are alone with a thrilling, a divine presence, the presence of truth.

The books which give you this beautiful sensation upon entering them are few. Those of Emerson, Thoreau, the Socratic Dialogues, the "Areopagitica," Maeterlinck's "Silence"—everyone will have his own haunts for this deep need, places and pages honored and endeared not only for the serenity of meditation that there awaits you as you enter, but because on leaving

the sojourner seems to acquire, like *Ariel's* messengers, a grace in parting.

As you read in these sanctuaries all prejudice will seem to you a blasphemy impossible; and for long after you are outside the walls you are walking in spirit in the tranquil light that rests upon the groves around them, are still regarding the world with the glance of the god. Well you know you cannot keep this grace for very long. And perhaps it should be said that probably your relatives know it of you far better. Partisanships and superstitions will soon be distracting you to innumerable errors of judgment.

But it is something to have looked at the world even for so brief a space simply impersonally and clearly—a spiritual refreshment almost necessitous. Who will sing to you, who comfort, who will warm and entertain you? Many talents. Very few will build a house of thought for you to sit in for a lucid interval. And it is not the least excellence of "Arms and Industry," though a quality likely to be overlooked through attention to the distinguished value of its message, that it has the sovereign beauty of searching and sincere meditation.

This message concerns the ineffectuality of war

in achieving the ultimate purposes for which it is undertaken. "We attempt," says Norman Angell, of the international polity movement, "to show the irrelevance of war to the ends either moral or material for which states exist."

The author illustrates with clarity the aim of the international polity movement. Among the pleaders attempting by various appeals to persuade a wronged man not to murder a certain person identified in the sufferer's mind as the cause of his injury, none is so likely to stay his hand effectually as that one who can convince him that he has mistaken the identity of the intended victim.

It is the effort of the volume to convince its audience that in planning to maintain the appearance of military superiority over other countries, national policies are directing their attack inaccurately, are not identifying properly the enemies of national well-being.

The purposes of war have been—or so the premise and current of the book's thought runs —either spiritual or material. The intent animating the great medieval wars was religious conquest. And the reason why religious warfare is now obsolete is that it has been realized

that physical conquest cannot effect religious conquest. Obviously nothing but the power of winning spiritual assent can achieve an actual spiritual change of belief. And in attacking flesh with arms rather than seeking the soul with the persuasion of truth, the contestants failed to identify rightly the nature of the force in opposition.

"The persuasion of truth" one says, rather than "the argument of truth," for, indeed, it is the power of perception rather than ability in reasoning that generally does in one's observation produce changes in men's souls. The author presents an instance of one great change of human opinion wrought primarily by observation.

"Between the middle of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Europe about 100,000 persons were condemned to death for witch-craft, —condemned by very acute-minded, educated men, trained lawyers accustomed to sift evidence. Moreover, many of these men had made a close study of the 'science' of witch-craft, and thoroughly believed in it.

"There were nevertheless a few men much earlier than this—Montaigne was one—who saw

that this 'science' was just learned rubbish; and one of them, who himself saw quite clearly the real character of witch-craft, expressed this opinion. 'The bulk of man-kind will always believe in witch-craft. When you get highly educated and exceptional men believing it, what possible hope is there of the average man with his loose notions of evidence and probability ever coming to see its errors? Not one brain in a million is capable of the learning and clearness of view necessary to refute these misconceptions.'

"Doubtless," continues Norman Angell, "if anyone of us here had attempted to argue with one of these eighteenth century judges we should have been hopelessly beaten. Yet if you put this question to an ordinary school-boy, 'Do you regard it as likely that an old woman could cause a storm at sea and make a Scotch king seasick?' he would reply immediately and dogmatically, 'No, it isn't likely.'

"Why is he thus able to dogmatize? He has formed the habit of judging natural phenomena straight, of seeing facts just simply as they are; of drawing the simplest and easiest conclusions from them with a mind untwisted by hypotheses, uninfluenced by theories of goblins and portents.

. . . Owing to the turn given to his mind by the attitude of those about him toward external things, he unconsciously adopts the inductive method of reasoning, a method which men are sometimes led to abandon during whole millenniums.

"That is the story of most advances in human ideas." "Argument and logic do not convince. The damp of the night drives deeper into my soul." It is not argument nor logic which made religious warfare obsolete, but a gradually increasing and finally complete knowledge that the determinant factor in creating its whole plan, its efficacy in creating faith, was utterly illusory.

"The cessation of religious war," says "Arms and Industry," "indicates the greatest outstanding fact in the history of civilized mankind during the last 1000 years, which is this: that all civilized governments have abandoned their claims to dictate the belief of their subjects. . . . How do you account for this—that a principle which I do not believe one man in a million could defend from all objections—has become the dominating rule of civilized government throughout the world?

"The conception on which it rested has been

shown to be—in the essential at least—an illusion, a misconception.''

So far, as to the world's experience concerning the irrelevance of war, of armed force, as a means of the extension of religious faith. The account of the irrelevance of war to a state's acquisition of material prosperity is the great and persuasive tale of the book, which the reader must enjoy for himself. Its range of outlook, its bold method, its lucidity of statement may be indicated by the instances quoted of the presentment of the case concerning the cessation of religious war.

Undoubtedly it is with the intent of increasing national prosperity that governments are formed and continue—certainly not with the intent of making human conditions worse. And the author forestalls early the adverse criticisms of those persons who somehow believe that economic prosperity is too ''sordid'' an end for the existence and activities of nations.

''Economy,'' of course, ''connotes not the interests of some persons or a class in the community, but the interests of the whole community. . . . The economic interests of a people mean not merely food and clothing and habitable houses, the means of decency and cleanliness and

good health, but books, education and some leisure, freedom from care, and the cramping terror of destitution.

"The material thing is but the expression of still profounder realities which cannot be separated therefrom, because with leisure and a wider outlook come a finer affection—the keener feeling for life."

The volume is a collection of six addresses to audiences as unlike in personnel and standpoint as the Institute of Bankers of Great Britain, and the University of Heidelberg. The tone of these letters is so various that whatever one's point of view one will find in them, I believe, one's every question anticipated and answered.

Small wonder that these distinguished audiences desired to learn more of the ideas of the author of "The Great Illusion," for these ideas challenge and break our former conceptions of reasonable polity, held not only by professional diplomats but by lay persons, breathing in unconsciously the superstitions afloat upon the common air.

Aside from natural curiosity, you may say, what difference does the opinion of a lay person make in those matters? What does it avail that

people talking on piazzas or in club rooms, or reading at home, have clear and right, or confused and wrong ideas about such a matter as world polity? They do not create it. They—that is to say, we—have no first-hand knowledge of it. Nevertheless their—that is to say, our—several opinions as lay persons finally constitute public opinion: and public opinion obviously makes a great difference, a very practical difference in the acts of a community.

It is the change of public opinion, as we have learned, that has stopped people's killing innocent old women as witches. To take an instance occurring inside our own experience, we have all seen within the last ten years how a change of public opinion about the sane Fourth of July has cut down by hundreds the death lists we used to read on the days after those insane Fourths of July which public opinion formerly supported. Here is a comparatively rapid change effected not primarily by the hospital authorities, the city governments nor the persons who saw most at first hand of the tragic results of our former folly, but simply by a clear and right vision on the part of lay persons in general. Undoubtedly the public prevalence of the con-

ception expressed in "Arms and Industry," that national, material prosperity is not primarily dependent upon a nation's ability to destroy and devastate the producing force of other great countries, would create a great and beneficial change in national life—a far-reaching change, whose end could not be foreseen.

"The story of civilization," says Norman Angell, "is the story of the development of ideas." And the reader of "Arms and Industry" will find in its pages the fascination characteristic of all readings of that great, unfinished narrative, the tale of the changing thought of the world of his own lifetime.

NONSENSE ABOUT WOMEN

In the midst of the humbug and unascertained assertion on the subject of women, no nonsense has ever seemed more persistent or been received with more awe than all the rubbish concerning the Mystery about Women.

Why are women any more mysterious than children or men or eagles or tigers, or any other manifestation of life? The real mystery of existence is true enough, of course, for everyone. But people who have a taste for exploring truth are always inclined to a skeptic impatience with those who create a special mystery where none exists. Such is the impatience crude, realistic minds are apt to experience in considering the vast literary importance of the William Sharp-Fiona MacLeod problem—an impatience enhanced by the recent appearance, in the holiday season, of a vellum-bound, limited edition of Fiona MacLeod's "Runes of Women."

It is a work intended to intensify the Druidic

superstition of mystery about women, mystically expressed by a mysterious nature.

Briefly and impressionistically presented, the Fiona MacLeod-William Sharp problem is somewhat as follows: At the age of about thirty-eight William Sharp, the Scotch critic, wrote a Celtic romance entitled "Pharais," which he decided to issue under the name of Fiona MacLeod. In a letter to Mrs. Thomas Janvier, of New York, who was in the secret of the pseudonym and asked, on reading the romance, why Mr. Sharp chose to publish it under a name other than his own, he replied:

"I can write out of my heart in a way I could not do as William Sharp, and indeed I could not do so if I were the woman Fiona MacLeod is supposed to be, unless veiled in scrupulous anonymity. . . .

"My truest self, the self who is below all other selves, and my most intimate life and joys and sufferings, thoughts, emotions and dreams, *must* find expression, yet I cannot save in this hidden way."

All this is very clear and sympathetic. But it should be pointed out that a complete imaginative identification with a fictive presence is

not so unusual an experience as the believers in the extreme mysteriousness of the Fiona MacLeod-William Sharp phenomenon would have us suppose. From Euripides' "Medea" to Thomas Hardy's "Tess," you may find too many instances to recount of an author's complete identification with the imagined life of a woman.

However, as I understand, the believers in the literary importance of the Fiona MacLeod-William Sharp mystery are impressed less by Mr. Sharp's ability to write creatively in an imaginative identification with the nature of another creature—a faculty perfectly comprehensible to every genuine fiction-lover—than by a rather different assumption which no one can exactly comprehend. That is the assumption that something happened spiritually to Mr. Sharp, in the nature of the physical adventure of *Hash Bash Ben,* the Hebrew bus-driver in the "Bab Ballad."

Just as for the Hebrew driver when he desired at heart to alter his nature,

> The organ which in man
> Between the eyebrows grows,
> Fell from his face, and in its place
> He found a Christian nose.

His tangled Hebrew beard
Which to his waist came down
Was now a pair of whiskers fair
His name, Adolphus Brown—

just as this metamorphosis of dual personality occurred for *Hash Bash Ben,* so from somewhat the same promptings, Mr. Sharp changed from a Scotch reviewer to a Gaelic bard, or rather to an Ionian poetess—changed throughout—not exactly physically, but with the attendance of startling physical phenomena. This at least is the assumption which is the great problem to those to whom it is justifiably so very probblematic. Mrs. Sharp tells us that she has been near her husband "when he has been in trance and I have felt the whole room shake with heightened vibration."

As Miss MacLeod, then, Mr. Sharp wrote for many years much charming prose, and some accomplished poetry, part of it beautiful, part of it tiresome—the best known expression of this poetry being included in the "Runes of Women." In this last performance lies, in my own view, the oddest and most unflattering and depressing feature of his career. As a man the most companionable of authors, when writing as

a woman, in the "Runes," he assumed some of the least agreeable characteristics of our sex. It is as though he said, "Now I will write as a woman, and give myself up to a state of mind devoid of reason."

For instance, writing as William Sharp, from Venice, he says delightfully, "Summer is everywhere here. On the Lido there were hundreds of butterflies, lizards, bees, birds and some heavenly larks—a perfect glow and tumult of life—and I shivered with happiness. The cool, fresh, joyous wind blew upon the waves white with foam and gay with the bronze-sailed fisher boats —the long waving grass was sweet-scented and delicious—the acacias were in blossoms of white —life—dear, wonderful, changeful, passionate, joyous life everywhere! I shall never forget this day—never, never." And he describes with humorous appreciation a call of his on Ouida surrounded by her beloved dogs and her truly terrible original paintings.

But, as a woman writing the "Runes of Women," he conceives of the universe not as phenomenon to understand or to enjoy, but a place for moaning and clinging and yearning and accusing—

We who love are those who suffer,
We who suffer most are those who most do love.
O the heartbreak come of longing love,
O the heartbreak come of love deferred,
O the heartbreak come of love grown listless.
Far upon the lonely hills I have heard the crying,
The lamentable crying of the ewes,—

and on, and on, and on with the crying and the wailing of women, wailing for those who have loved, and for those who have not loved, for those who have children and for those who have not children, wailing for passion, wailing for age, moaning for everything in a woman's experience. This, too, with an air of putting everyone around in the wrong by a tone of strong, self-righteous resistance to reason. As though Fiona MacLeod said, "There! Now! Do not think you will ever get to the bottom of what is the matter with me. The more mysteriously I mourn, the more impressive I shall become!"

A great deal of speculation has been expended lately on the consideration of how women would act if they had to be men, and to go to war, etc. It is odd and rather staggering, in the light of Mr. Sharp's type of consciousness at the times when he became Miss Fiona MacLeod, to consider how men might behave if they became women.

It would be a dismal circumstance if, just as women were setting out hopefully on the path of scientific inquiry and exploration, and a belief that an ounce of *Minimum Wage* founded on ascertained fact is worth a pound of Runes—men were to start back along the road to the ideal expressed by the customs of the heroine of "The Scottish Chiefs," and the achievement of one's ends by means of fainting and of "bursting into tears."

It should be added that *William Sharp* and *Fiona Macleod* were or was a strong believer or believers in more freedom, more self-reliance for women. That is why one especially regrets his, her, or their awe before Runic seizures. For these mysterious Runic seizures, while they may be pitiable and may be unavoidable, may be cured or may be endured, certainly should no more be regarded as manifestations of *wisdom* than the performances of Sir Anthony Absolute: and no more be prized than fits of cursing.

Curses, of course, are revered and very much feared by such persons as believe in the efficacy of Voodoo and the Black Magic, and are careful to propitiate fate in certain games of chance by saying, "Come seven. Come eleven." These

persons have, however, not been regarded as wise leaders of thought for woman or for anyone else. Some of the basest and most needless cruelties to woman have been caused by superstitious terrors concerning her natural faculties—the superstitious terror that caused the burning of women as witches—the superstitious terror prevalent among many foreign immigrants lest the Lord of all Mercy regard mercy as a kind of impiety against him, and take some mysterious vengeance on the race if the sufferings of women in becoming mothers are alleviated.

A truce to Runic beliefs about Woman. Her future, like that of the rest of the race, will not be bettered by any manufactured mystifications about her, but only by a clearer understanding of the realities of human natural history on earth.

THE LETTERS OF A WOMAN HOMESTEADER

In the lucent atmosphere of M. Romain Rolland's "Life of Jean François Millet," there sparkles a conversation of the artist, Rousseau, which has always had for me a profound charm.

It was, it seems, Rousseau's custom to spend his winters and autumns in a wood-cutter's house, in a forest whose trees he could watch in silence for days at a time. "I heard the voices of the trees," he said. "The surprises of their movements, their varieties of form, and even the strangeness of their attraction to the light suddenly revealed to me the language of forests. Their whole leafy world was a world of the dumb, whose signs I guessed and whose passions I discovered."

The admirers of the paintings of Rousseau in the Art Institute and the Metropolitan Museum will long have observed, fused on the canvases in these collections, the very genius and clear fire of attention these words express; will long

have felt in the presence of these happy contributions the refreshment one feels in anything that helps one to inherit the earth.

Such is the quality of the refreshment one feels in the "Letters of a Woman Homesteader." Here is a woman who has looked about her with an absolute attention, and has given us a beautifully clear and specific account of what she saw and lived in four years on a cattle ranch in Wyoming.

To choose detail well; to present a simple, objective chronicle of works and days requires a brilliant and uncommon gift whose rarity is very seldom realized. It is the gift that has for generations held the readers of "The March of the Ten Thousand," the readers of Caesar's "Gallic Wars," the readers of "Robinson Crusoe." A thousand, dim, dauby, mussy and copied productions of fancy have faded to nothing, while these vivid and four-square achievements shine on in the bright air of the accurate observation of clear-edged fact. Absolute attention. I think it is the most distinguished faculty on earth—surely the most tonic.

Every author, every artist who exhibits it will impart at least something of the faculty to his

audience. I cannot say that I had ever positively realized that city trees were breathing each its own existence on Chicago streets till I walked along them after looking at one of Rousseau's canvases. After reading a page of Thoreau's "Week" or John Muir's "Sierra Summer"—those two great woodsmen of the East and West—one will feel one's perceptions suddenly stabbed broad awake to the great actual realities behind our lives here today: will realize one dwells upon a globe, and not merely so many miles from the Loop district. The "Letters of a Woman Homesteader" may well be placed for their philosophy and fine capacity for looking at the whole lay of the land, beside these admirable volumes.

The book is composed of letters to a friend. They are said to be printed as they were written, except for occasional omissions and the alteration of some of the names. The author, Elinor Pruitt Stewart, was left a widow with a little girl of two. She had no means, and, as the term is conventionally used, no education. The reader of common sense, however, who learns that she could mow a field, could ride, take care of horses, could cook, could sew, could milk, could camp

out alone with a child under six years old, and could paper ceilings, will find her undoubtedly a remarkably accomplished woman. The natural pride one feels in the exhibition of any unusual human ingenuity and ability will mount in a rising tide as one reads of the woman homesteader's sources of self-reliance.

After her husband's death she became the housekeeper of a nurses' training school in Denver. Here she accidentally strained her side in pulling a heavy weight; decided that she would try to find an occupation that would give her more outdoor air; through a newspaper advertisement obtained a position as the housekeeper of a well-to-do cattleman in Wyoming and filed a claim upon land adjoining his ranch.

The letters are the animated chronicle of an able housekeeper, a devoted mother, a public-spirited neighbor, a warm, sympathetic, helpful and imaginative friend, an excellent rider and camper in Wyoming—all these and other things she may herself best reveal to the reader. She undergoes pain, and hardship and grief. She seems never to minimize or idiotically idealize these factors in existence. But she intends to be happy.

"I had planned to see the cliff-dweller's home; to live right there until I caught the spirit of the surroundings enough to live over their lives, in imagination anyway. I had planned to see the old missions, and to go to Alaska; to hunt in Canada. I even dreamed of Honolulu. Life stretched before me, one long, happy jaunt. I aimed to see all the world I could, but to travel unknown by-paths to do it. But first I wanted to try homesteading."

And in homesteading the same intention is manifest. "I have done most of my cooking at night, have milked seven cows every day and have done all the hay-cutting, so you see I have been working. But I have found time to put up thirty pints of jelly and the same amount of jam for myself. I used wild fruits, gooseberries, currants, raspberries and cherries. I have almost two gallons of cherry butter.

"We began haying July 5, and finished September 8. After working so hard and so steadily I decided on a day off, so yesterday I saddled the pony, took a few things I needed, and Jerrine and I fared forth. Baby can ride behind quite well. We got away by sunup and a glorious day we had. We followed a stream higher up into

the mountains and the air was so keen and clear at first we had on our coats. There was a tang of sage and pine in the air, and our horse was midside deep in rabbit-brush, a shrub covered with flowers that look and smell like golden-rod. The blue distance promised many alluring adventures, so we went along singing and simply gulping in summer. Occasionally a bunch of sage-chickens would fly out of the sage-brush or a jack-rabbit would leap out. Once we saw a bunch of antelope gallop over a hill."

Oh, the charm and wisdom of such an ideal for a woman's life! Nine-tenths of "advice to women" and certainly the main tendency of the overwhelming amount of publication "for women" in women's magazines is in the direction of an opposite ideal—of urging women to cheapen and debilitate their existence by innumerable, imitative, competitive, stuffy, wasteful and enfeebling undertakings. To cook potatoes so that they will taste like the mushrooms other people can afford to buy: to paste designs cut out of wall paper around your children's guimpes; to jam into crowded stores to purchase materials for two cents a yard and spend almost all your capital of energy in turning it

into a costume such as you have seen other people wearing; or to buy mawkish tenth-rate books because thousands of other people are buying them —all these enfeebling and senseless dissipations will be eagerly recommended a hundred and a thousand times (especially to wives and mothers) for once that the women of our country are ever urged either to rest or to refresh themselves by a draught of outdoor air or a straight look at something outside themselves.

A genuinely public-spirited magazine for women ought in my view to say, "Do not cook the potatoes to taste like mushrooms. Do not waste your time and strength fussing over old clothes. Do not buy poor materials of any kind. Get the best you can afford. Do not consider it necessary to do or to get anything on earth simply because other people are doing or getting it. Try to eliminate all puttering undertakings from your existence."

Difficult as this advice would be to follow in the face of present standards, it might at least suggest a wisdom, irrespective of achievement —the wisdom of using one's strength well. There seems little reason to fear but that life will always supply an abundant element of the put-

tering. It is something at least to have planned to watch antelope gallop over a hill.

About twelve years ago, I enjoyed the opportunity of hearing Prince Kropotkin make, before a great Middle Western audience, an eloquent address on self-created morality. In the midst of his address he referred to the starvations most men and women had to endure in their lack of opportunity to know and study geography. A pleased stir of amusement ran through Prince Kropotkin's audience; and was succeeded by a quick, thoughtful breath, a dawning perception that he had suddenly led us to a peak in Darien. In my own mind at that instant rose a misted vision of the wide range, the broad, unknown and veiled variety of our own country and her far waters and wild woods, a beauty so seldom enjoyed, so narrowly understood. So that our actual country doubtless is hardly more known to millions of us than an art gallery might be to an entering rat foraging through it for food.

Probably many, many persons have a belief unreasoned and of course unascertained, a belief as strange and deep-seated in one's consciousness as the recurrent dream of falling as one goes to sleep, that we shall one day really inherit the

earth. Instead of all crowding together, competing, pushing and grabbing in cities, we shall spread out more and more over the lands of continents, in lives more self-reliant, more spaciously conceived, less like those of creatures fussily scurrying around together on the same round of spiritual and material pathways in a few jammed ant hills, and more like the lives of men and women inhabiting a globe, capable of knowing something about its great trees and streams and plains and mountains and of looking around us and out among the crystal paths of the other stars.

In such a life and vision undoubtedly many obscurities and difficulties will be made clear in manners quite unlooked for. The bright and simple candor of the "Letters of a Woman Homesteader" illuminates social subjects and questions too numerous for comment.

On a second occasion when the woman homesteader and *Jerrine*—then not three years old—went off on an exploring expedition, they found in the morning after a night in camp, that they were all but snowbound. Over a canyon rim to the east the woman homesteader saw smoke. Towards the spot where this seemed to be hover-

ing she and the baby rode their pack horse for many hours through a snowstorm and without a road or trail. The smoke rose from a cabin in a clearing. "A little old man came bustling out. As I rode up he said 'Whither, friend?' I said 'Hither.' Then he asked, 'Air you spying around for one of them dinged game wardens arter that deer I killed yisteddy?' I told him I had never seen a game warden and that I didn't know he had killed a deer. 'Wall,' he said, 'air you spying around arter that gold mine I diskivered over on the west side of Baldy?'

"But after a while I convinced him that I was no more nor less than a foolish woman lost in the snow. Then he said, 'Light, stranger, and look at your saddle.' So I 'lit' and looked, and then I asked him what part of the South he came from. He answered 'Yell County, by Gum! The best place in the United States, or in the world either.' That was my introduction to Zebulon Pike Parker.

"Only two 'Johnny Rebs' could have enjoyed each other's company as Zebulon Pike and myself did. Zebulon Pike had a big, open fireplace with back logs and andirons." As they sat beside this he told his guest about his life in Yell

County; his sister's wedding, and how she wore a "cream-colored poplin, with a red rose throwed up on it"—all his family's history. He made molasses candy with *Jerrine*. He played the fiddle for them. They stayed all night, *Mrs. Stewart* and *Jerrine* sleeping on a buffalo robe and two bearskins by the fire.

In the morning he showed them his sheep. "Some of them looked like they should have been sold ten years before. 'Don't you ever sell any of your sheep?' I asked. 'No'm. There was a fellow came here once, and wanted to buy some of my wethers, but I wouldn't sell any, because I didn't need any money.' Then he went from animal to animal, caressing each and talking to them, calling them each by name. He milked his one cow, fed his two little mules and then we went back to the house to cook breakfast. We had delicious venison steak, smoking hot, and hoe-cakes and the 'bestest' coffee and honey.

"After breakfast we set out for home. Our pack transferred to one of the little mules, we rode 'Jeems' and Mr. Parker rode the other mule. He took us another way down canyon after canyon, so that we were able to ride all the time and could make better speed. We came down out

of the snow and camped within twelve miles of home in an old, deserted ranch house. We had grouse and sage chicken for supper. I was so anxious to get home that I could hardly sleep, but at last I did, and was only awakened by the odor of coffee, and barely had time to wash before Zebulon Pike called breakfast. Afterwards we fixed 'Jeems' ' pack so that I could still ride, for Zebulon Pike was very anxious to get back to his 'critters.' ''

She reached home at noon. This agreeable adventure was the foundation of a long, intimate family friendship between *Mrs. Stewart* and *Zebulon Pike Parker,* of the most satisfactory appreciation on both sides.

Think of the weariness, miasma and miseries emanating from nothings that would have surrounded the same situation for any of the characters in a Pinero play. The woman homesteader tells many tales of episodes concerning very serious relationships between men and women, and on the subject of sex seems to show all the "intelligence of the heart" as well as of the head.

"I believe," says A. E. (George Wallace Russell), "that those who live on the land have

a deeper life than those who live in towns, who deceive themselves, thinking that the twinkling of a sophisticated mind is wisdom." And he quotes the song of an Irish poetess:

> Rise to your feet, O daughters, rise;
> Our mother still is young and fair.
> Let the world look into your eyes
> And see her beauty shining there.

These words of an Irish singer to her own countrywomen might well have been spoken to the women of our own country today. What book of ours will speak this necessary message to us? In the midst of the racket of advice for women's unhealthy and artificial use of their powers what deep voice will say, "Look out around you at the beauty of the earth"? This book will say it, "The Letters of a Woman Homesteader."

Doubtless the whole *Weltanschauung,* the whole conception of life of countless women in America, has become completely citified, and even in devotion, imitative and competitive. An outdoor experience for these would be but a repetition of the tale of *Ardelia* in Arcady—a weariness to them and an existence null and dead.

Before we ever inherit our country I believe we shall have to learn to enjoy it for itself. We shall have to care for it not alone for the money to be made from its acres, nor chiefly for the things to be acquired by that money, but for such happiness as dropped upon the woman homesteader and her baby as they rode singing through the golden rabbit-brush—from the passion for the open that speaks in the rich "Sierra Summer" hours of John Muir's in the Merced River Valley, "with its dark up-sweeping forests and glorious, radiating beauty that pours into our flesh and bones like heat-rays from the fire."

Before the children of today and tomorrow can see the beauty of their Mother Earth reflected back from the light of women's eyes women will have to look out upon that beauty, not for any ulterior end whatever but for the single purpose of delight.

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AMERICAN FARM WOMEN

"Back to the Land!" It is the reply constantly given to the questions raised by city unemployment, city poverty and city crime. Our country has the most beautiful and richest sweep of continuous land in the world. Why do we fail to use it more productively? Why does the youth of farm land flock increasingly to city life?

Everything we have comes out of the earth, originally. The war, the high economy of resource practiced by other countries, have forced these considerations sharply on our consciousness in the last year.

Wide is the comment on our failure to realize and conserve our country's productive power. "The waste land inside the city of Chicago alone," exclaimed one of the Belgian ambassadors to the United States, "would produce enough vegetables and grain to feed all Belgium."

But the actual, first-hand producers from the earth have not always found their experience fortunate: and an attempt to learn, and especially to learn from farm women in what ways this experience has been least fortunate, is just now especially apt and valuable.

The Secretary of Agriculture recently determined to send a letter to the farm women of the United States, asking them to describe their chief needs, and how these needs could best be served by the Department of Agriculture.

Over two thousand replies were received by the Government. But these express the thought and the answer of many thousands more, as numbers of the correspondents followed the Secretary's suggestion that they "first discuss the question with women neighbors, or with church societies or organizations, and submit an answer representing the combined opinions of your entire community."

The replies were received in all forms—"carefully typewritten statements, notes scribbled on the back or margin of the Secretary's letter, or painstakingly written on scraps of wrapping paper." The letters seemed to indicate "that on some farms at least, the ordinary conveniences

for correspondence are regarded as luxuries."

The Secretary's request was sent at such a time as to reach the farm women at a period after the harvest, so that there might be greater opportunity for leisure for a reply. But according to the evidence of the correspondents the leisure of farm women is at no period long. Think what it must have meant to numbers of these letter writers, under these conditions, and with no better conveniences for communication in some instances than wrapping paper, to formulate and to express, either from a collective or an individual standpoint, the extremely able and clever replies sent from the whole country to Washington, in this remarkable inquiry.

The answers—or the answers selected as typical for publication, are issued in four Government bulletins on the Domestic Needs, the Economic Needs, and the Educational and Social and Labor needs of Farm Women.

The composite photograph of the life of farm women in the United States from sea to sea, which is presented in these bulletins forms one of the most arresting and original human documents imaginable.

What impresses one most forcibly at the outset

in reading the multitudinous letters of the collection is the strong, common characteristic of their downrightness. From Maine, from Texas, from Oregon and Florida and Southern California, from every section of the country, the letters are straightforward.

The grace of their clarity and dignity is the best possible refutation of a misconception the correspondents describe, in the first bulletin issued, as one of the most pervasive causes of difficulty in their situation—a misconception of farmers and of farm women which hopelessly disparages and misinterprets with wearisome patronage what they really are.

"The thing that seems to me to most need remedying is the attitude most town-people have towards the farmer," writes a New York farm woman whose views are expressed in many, many other letters. "He is represented either as a 'Rube' with chin whiskers and his trousers in his boots, or as having several motor-cars bought with his ill-gotten gains from farm-products figured at the highest retail-prices. One of these ideas is just as accurate as the other. If city people could be brought to understand in some measure, something of farm conditions, it would

be much pleasanter and more profitable for the farmer."

If one considers the persons one really knows on farms and on fruit, grain and vegetable ranches in this country, and then considers farmers and their wives as represented in the periodical literature of our nation, one will, I believe, regard this widespread complaint as just. Professional nursing, for instance, has fared considerably better. Greatly changed since the day of *Betsey Prig* and *Sairey Gamp,* professional nursing as portrayed in contemporary letters has to some extent been drawn from life, and followed in general characterization the gesture of its history. Quite as changed as professional nursing, professional farming as portrayed in contemporary letters has very seldom been drawn from life, but has on the contrary been copied from a representation in vogue two generations ago.

"Last but not least of the farm woman's wishes," says a Middle Western woman, "is to see the profession of farming the equal of any profession. In importance it surely stands at the head. No other profession requires so wide a range of knowledge. No other profession

brings such poor pay for labor expended and money invested.''

The letters on economic needs bear eloquent testimony to the lack of household equipment on farms.

''Most of the women,'' writes a Georgia farmer's wife, ''do their own washing, ironing, cooking and dish-washing in the same old way their great-grandmothers did 75 years ago, with never a thought of vacuum-cleaners, washing-machines or kitchen-sinks. Even the ones a little more enlightened can never make their husbands understand, while these same husbands have so many of the improved farm-tools.''

''Self-expression is the longing of every human heart,'' writes a Michigan woman, ''and a person who does not so express herself is a failure and life is a disappointment. The farmer expresses himself in the farm. You see many a farm where there is a cement floor in the barn to which he will point with pride—the cellar in the house awful. A sheep-dip but no bath-tub, a fine buggy and a poor baby-carriage.''

Extraordinary is the variety of economic needs in farm life the letter writers portray—the need of stump eradicators, and of better

transportation, and of intensive farming, and of single tax, and, above all, the country-wide privation from heavy farm mortgages and farm loans at an exorbitant rate of interest.

One of the most interesting demands and descriptions in the collection is composed of the letters concerning Girls' Canning Clubs.

"From reports of tomato clubs," says a charming letter from Mississippi, "the girls have been made happier and better because they can have some of the things they want and are proud they have earned the money for them, and I think the women would be.

"In this country there are wild plums, blackberries, dewberries and crab-apples. We can grow apples, peas, peaches, quinces and figs. If the fruit could be made into jams, jellies, preserved and canned and a market found for them, it would mean many dollars for the farm women."

We learn of wonderful feats of this kind—full of interest and attraction, and reading in their accounts of small holdings and bright returns, like classic eclogues of youthful prowess and pastoral adventure.

The best yield of 1913 was achieved by Clyde

Sullivan of Ousley, Georgia. On only a tenth of an acre, she produced 5,354 pounds of tomatoes. She canned 2,266 pounds at a profit of $132.39.

Two young sisters of North Carolina, May Belle and Margaret Brown, had two tenth-acre plots and realized a profit of $214.12.

But the economic needs of farm women are too numerous even to list: and range from the brief and lively answer of a New York State organization of farmers' wives to a more detailed autobiography from Kansas, which I cannot help quoting almost in its entirety as a record of sheer human strength and heroism.

"I read your letter at a meeting of our Sunshine Club," writes the New York State correspondent, "and asked the ladies present what, in their opinion, would help and benefit us most. The answer came with one accord, *More Money.* And there you have the answer as to what we need most."

"We came to Kansas," writes the Kansan woman homesteader, "from the southern part of Wisconsin: had at least $1,200 when we arrived in June, 1910.

"That year, raised only a feed crop. Next

year, 1911, bought two horses, planted and tilled 150 acres of rented land, beside breaking out the required land on homestead. That year raised nothing.

"Husband worked out fifty miles from home from June till November. I took care of cattle, mowed prairie hay, nursed horses bit by rattlesnake, did every kind of work subject to men.

"That year we lived on anything but proper food, having no meat or vegetables, never a taste of potatoes, or cabbage, or onions (except wild ones), from March, 1911, until July, 1912, when my husband came home from harvest with money.

"Then, in March, 1912, the heavy storm came. We lost three horses, two calves and one milch cow. We waited three days, and the weather was warmer, so I togged up in my husband's clothes and marched out to help him skin the animals before the wolves could get the hides. Thus we were able to buy a few more groceries.

"Spring, 1912, came. Horses too thin to work: had to wait for grass: planted 90 acres; got a bumper crop of feed but had no money to buy seed, so had to plant Eastern cane seed, and that did not develop.

"Husband went East to harvest: I cared for the crop. Winter found him away at ditch-work again and I on the homestead with children and stock. I had to haul feed, water, coal; and sometimes only for the grace of God I would have despaired and ended all.

"Spring of April, 1913, husband came home to farm; two days later I was called to a case of pneumonia to nurse—I being a graduate of —— School of Nursing, earned $50 which kept us until August. Husband went harvesting; brought home more money and paid up back debts. Nothing whatever raised the year 1913.

"Here is the question—What can Uncle Sam do to help the homesteader's wife? We are very grateful to our Government. But when you live where you can see sad-faced women with their children crying about their skirts for things to eat, eager for even a drink of sour milk—good, pretty women whose hair turns gray in a few weeks of worry over where the work is coming from to buy flour—we then wonder if Uncle Sam couldn't dam the streams in western Kansas and help supply, not only work but water for many who have to haul water 3, 4, and 5 miles, and

have done since coming here, and the women have most of that to do the year around."

A good water supply is not only one of the greatest economic needs, but one of the greatest domestic needs of women on farms, and of men, too.

"I suggest," says a New Jersey correspondent, "and am indorsed by the neighboring farm women who are poor like myself, that the Government help the farmers' wives by making their water supply easier. Oh, what a boon that would be! Our backs and arms ache, and we grow stooped and crippled from pumping water."

The domestic water supply question is connected, of course, with drainage and with sanitation and hygiene. From satiric comment on the city dwellers' sentimentality over "The Old Oaken Bucket" and the country dwellers' marked preference for an excellent modern water system, to the description of the discomfort suffered through great areas, and the rural lack of information about hygiene, about medicine and nursing, this entire section is absorbing to the reader who likes to look at pages from the book of real life.

Loss of life from ignorance. You will think of it long after you read what some of the warm-hearted men and women of Tennessee, of Florida, of Oklahoma and of North Dakota, have to say upon this subject. You will think the longer because of the simplicity, the sincerity and reserve of their account of pain and danger, unattended and misunderstood, on country byways.

"The greatest need in our community, which is situated in prairie country subjected to terrible blizzards and with roads almost impassable or no roads at all, is rural nurses.

"Women on homesteads often die in childbirth and the life of the little stranger is often lost also, because of no doctor and no nurse.

"If the Department could find a way to have a rural nurse system established it would be the best assistance for the women in this locality ever known, where we sometimes have to go 30 or 40 miles to a doctor."

If the letters which are concerned with domestic and with economic needs make the deepest appeal, the correspondence of the writers who are interested in the lack of education and recreation on farms excels in breadth of outlook and clearness of vision.

"Education is the first thing needed," says a farm woman from Tennessee, "education of every kind. Not simply agricultural education, although that has its place. . . . I mean the education that unfastens doors and opens up vistas. . . . I think I have had use of every fragment of knowledge I have ever acquired even to Greek and analytic geometry, and still I am in the primer. Knowledge is power, as I learned years ago from my copy-book, but even if it were not, it is a solace for pain, and a panacea for loneliness. You may teach us farm women to kill flies, stop eating pork and ventilate our homes, but if you will put in us the thirst for knowledge you will not need to do these things. We will do them ourselves."

Tremendous is the country-wide protest against the long hours of labor on farms, the lack of a holiday, of one day's rest in seven, even of a half-holiday for farm women. Overwhelming is the desire for recreation and for genuine social life, the tale of overwork in loneliness and isolation.

"I have never been to a lecture or play or show since marriage," writes a Texas woman.

"Thousands," says a man in Illinois, concern-

ing farm women, "rise at 4 A. M. and peg away until 10 P. M."

A Missouri woman has been on her husband's farm without a vacation for thirty years.

But before pursuing further the narrative of all work and no play, the truth-seeker should make two important discriminations. First—it must be remembered that the letter writers were asked to describe the needs, not the advantages of farm life, so that the panorama their letters spread before one has no scope for lights on the summits. Then—even under these conditions of correspondence there are many letters recounting great contentment and good fortune on farm lands.

A Nebraska woman writes—"Having received your communication in regard to what I think about agriculture—I think it is the grandest, most independent life one can live. Women in general are not much for outdoor work. But I have made garden and raised flowers for over thirty years."

Whatever the experience of the farm women of the United States as expressed in these fascinating letters, in which they have stood up and testified to the nation, their words have all the

convinced tone of speakers who have nailed their colors to the mast. There is no question whatever of their leaving the ways of the farm. The whole question is: what is to be done in remaining, to be happier.

The Secretary of Agriculture points out in the preface that in many cases men had signed the letters, and recorded their wives' views, or their own: and he regards it as a pleasant feature of these replies that the vast majority of the men wish farm women's lives to be freer from crushing hard work, less lonely and more recreative.

Here is a hopeful sign, from both farmers and farmers' wives, of what one may wish, if not quite expect, might be a genuine revolution in a certain habit of mind characteristic not only of men, or farmers, but of women too, and of the entire nation. I mean the mental habit of regarding drudgery and indeed unhappy drudgery as a virtue and excellence on the globe. This gloomy and ungenerous fallacy is responsible for an enormous amount of needless evil. A disagreeable superstition at its best; at its worst, when the respect for a burdensome existence for other persons takes the form of regarding a desire of happiness as an unworthiness on their

part, the esteem of drudgery for drudgery's sake becomes really intolerable. "We are all tempted to frown upon our neighbours' pleasures," says Stevenson.

The short and simple annals of the reports have some of the beauty of the wisdom that found life more divine for the woman who was not careful and troubled for many things; and much of the dignity of the demand for our old constitutional birthright, not only to life and liberty, but to the pursuit of happiness.

SEEING THE COUNTRY

I

The National Government maintains the largest publishing establishment in the United States.

It issues in a year on an enormous variety of subjects—the care of children, ethnology, geology, forestry, soils, patents, geography, animal industry, agriculture, fish and fisheries, irrigation, mining—more contributive, detailed and first-hand material than any commercial house in the field.

Who reads the pages of these multitudinous chronicles? Large numbers of each edition are distributed in the Government departments, and to private persons known to be especially interested in the subjects presented. But, though not to be purchased at bookstores, nor through the ordinary channels of the booktrade, all these works printed by the Government are for sale, and can be obtained for a moderate price from

the Superintendent of Documents, commonly known as the Chief of the Government Book Store.

The whole enterprise is a governmentally owned business which has received little general comment, either from the point of view of its success as an instance of Government ownership, or from the more obvious point of view of the value of the publications issued. Given over to the consideration of a rather limited line of subjects in the field of commercial publication, review columns are ordinarily silent about the tremendous and increasing body of printed information circulated in documents.

Not only from Federal enterprise, but from State and Municipal printing establishments, and from the large, endowed institutions for special subjects of public education, such as the Russell Sage, the Rockefeller, and the Carnegie Foundations, the increase of publications of this character in the United States in the last ten years has been overwhelming. It is one of the most striking features of our contemporary history.

No other country issues so many documents as the United States.

II

Assembled for the purpose of practical, public education in the broadest sense, the purpose of informing the public clearly and accurately about innumerable facts composing the contemporary history of the country, this activity cannot be said, however, to have attained its end as completely as might be desired. Filed for reference in many institutions, only in one community have these publications, which should belong widely to the citizens of the country, been placed in circulation through a civic effort.

In May, 1915, the Chicago Public Library, initiated in its Civics and Documents Department the beginning of a duplicate circulating collection.

"For years," said Miss Woodford, the organizer of the circulating collection, "the publications in our document library, though in constant use for reference, could not be taken away from the building. Nevertheless, at the request of distinguished visitors in the city, and of important business men preparing addresses on special subjects, the library often exhibited the

courtesy of permitting bulletins to be carried away for loans of short duration.

"For instance, when President Taft was last here, we allowed him to use the library in this manner. Colonel Roosevelt almost always in his sojourns in Chicago is studying some special subject: on these occasions we have always been glad to permit his son or his secretary to take bulletins and reports to him containing the data in which he was interested. But we are socialists enough to feel that these privileges should be general rather than special: and a committee appointed for the purpose of reporting on the value of the Documents Department, completed last Spring a plan by which the documents collection had been increased in such a manner as to answer the purposes of both reference and general circulation.

"Of course, just as with books commercially issued, the various publications are of very different value. Often, unfortunately, the people who know most about a subject do not know how to write about it. Many reports of great value in their scholarship suffer by unskilled presentment. On the other hand, departmental workers possessed of ability as writers often lack keenness, scope and scholarship in research. The

bulletins of the Bureau of Ethnology are both well-written and of very high quality in the character of the material they contribute. They have extraordinary interest, and are admittedly the source of some of our most delightful stories for children, notably the 'Uncle Remus' tales."

III

Taken as a whole, contemporary bulletin publication in the United States has the intention of informing us about this country. It provides a species of perpetual National Exposition, in which one can rove about with extraordinary educational advantage, looking at one exhibit after another, lingering longest over the subjects one enjoys most.

It chances, perhaps because of belonging to a family of civil engineers, that I have always found a special interest in books of overland travel. I cannot say I have ever read one without a sensation of pleasure—the classic journey of Coronado, Parkman's "Oregon Trail," Mark Twain's "Roughing It," the passages in Whitman's "Specimen Days" included in the "Jaunt West," Stevenson's "Across the Plains," Walter Wyckoff's "Workers," recounting his Westward-

bound experiences in seeking employment, Kipling's "From Sea to Sea." From our oldest record of European settlement in this country down to the most recent account of excavations at Pecos—history, romance, poetry and adventure —the wild face of vivid truth shines from the most casual of these tales.

On account of this preference I chose from Miss Woodford's array, the Department of the Interior's Guide-Book of the Western United States, composed of the four bulletins describing the geography, the geology and history and enterprise to be observed along the Overland railroad, the Santa Fé, the Northern Pacific, the Shasta and the Coast Line.

The Overland is the pioneer of the Western railroads. The law which authorized the building of a railroad to the Pacific Coast was bitterly opposed in Congress, objections being urged by the "practical."

Morse, one learns, fought the inclusion of the entire West in the Government, on the ground that it was too large for fusion. "All settlers who go beyond the Mississippi River," he observed weightily, in 1819, "will be lost forever to the United States."

And hear the eloquence of Daniel Webster, in 1843—"What do we want of that vast and worthless area—that region of savages and wild beasts, of deserts, of shifting sands and whirling winds, of dust, of cactus and prairie dogs? To what use could we ever hope to put those great deserts and those endless mountain ranges? . . . What could we ever do with the Western Coast, a coast of 3,000 miles, rock-bound, cheerless and uninviting."

Tempora Mutantur. Can you look through the pages describing the wonderful way by the Mormon Trail and Great Salt Lake, swinging down through the green terraces of the Sacramento Valley, by Rodeo, Pinole and San Pablo, and read, without a sense of dramatic excitement —"San Francisco Bay is the largest and most active harbor on the Pacific Coast. Besides the Coast-wise routes, the port maintains steam-ship connections with Australia, Hawaii, Mexico, Central and South America, the Philippines, China and Japan. The direct foreign trade is chiefly with British Columbia, South America, China and Japan. Although the export grain business has most largely shifted to the ports of Oregon and Washington, San Francisco's permanence as

one of the greatest ports of the country is assured by its advantageous position, the wealth of back country and its command of trans-Pacific and trans-continental trade routes. Three large railroad systems—the Southern Pacific (with two trans-continental lines) the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fé, and the Western Pacific—connect it with the East."

The plan of all the bulletins is to chronicle the points of interest in the parts of the country visited, in the order in which one reaches them on the train. The bulletin of the Shasta and the Coast Line, of course, describes the variety of the Pacific Coast and the whole region dominated by the beautiful, silvered peak of Shasta, visible so long and so far, like some great frozen cloud.

The Overland route report is the narrative of the Great Plains.

The bulletins of the Northern Pacific and the Santa Fé recount the changes of the country to the north and the south, with journeys to the Yellowstone Park and the Grand Canyon.

The pleasure to be derived from reading these reports has a certain element like that one used to enjoy in visiting the old Chicago Exposition where you moved from the spool exhibit to the

furs and the paintings and the scroll saws, in a species of pastoral course determined simply by physical contiguity. Geology—mastodon bones—the alfalfa crop—the largest creamery in the world at Topeka—geysers—the Calico Mountains—the wild country of the Playas—the ancient ruin of the Casa Grande—you pass from one to another of these topics, not perhaps absorbed in every single one of them, but realizing that persons who fail to find the whole panorama presented remarkable and enlivening have something the matter with them, something literal, something stupid, something that prevents them from appreciating the little and the large realities of the country of the genuine forces that make up its life for millions of people. Everybody ought to take these fascinating journeys: and read the Government bulletins about them.

Perhaps the most interesting and abiding impression to be derived from the bulletins of the Guide-Book of the Western United States is from their admirable geological contour maps and accompanying accounts of the geologic succession of rock. Everyone has experienced in autumn, when the trees first stand around you bare-

branched and unfluttered, a sudden, thrilling sense, "Now, I shall know the trees. This is what they are really like."

On the far northwest and southwest journeys, as the earth grows barer and more bare, and the wild rocks and shales tilt and tumble along the way, you have a like impression—a bracing sense that you are seeing the very structure of the earth. Especially in the great canyon regions —at the canyons of the Yellowstone and of the Colorado, as you look at the deep-gashed splendor of the strata opening their rich reds and grays and yellows and browns before you, it seems to you that your knowledge of the earth on which your life is passed has heretofore been shallow and imperfect. You never have known the earth before.

These national records will give you a more profound and a wider understanding of it: and bring back to travelers innumerable memories.

Doubtless, if you went by the usual way, it was evening when you first were on the border of the Painted Desert. Not a tree. A horseman with flapping elbows and swinging bridle rides away, along the crumbling walls of the wash. The yellow, far-off *mesas* and the sloping

cuestas, the twilight wind, the beautiful, long lights and shadows all say, "A thousand years are as a minute. A minute is as a thousand years. Who has been here for a second has lived in eternity." The train rackets and rackets along into the dark that seems to rise so suddenly out of the ground in Arizona and to show stars of so many colors. You had amused yourself with thinking the rider disappearing in the distance was *Ben Holladay's* Pony Express. But now you know he was the vanishing ideas of Daniel Webster.

THE TRAINING OF A FORESTER

Our reading runs too much in ruts. Numbers of books supposed to appeal to a special class might better belong to the whole public. Indeed any book worth the name is for the world. This is the case with Gifford Pinchot's small volume, "The Training of a Forester."

Ostensibly directed to an audience of intending foresters, here is a book which might well be read by hundreds of thousands of young men and boys among the lay public, read both for the epic information of present-day realities it will give and for its practical suggestion for a life program.

"At one time or another," says the preface, "the largest question before every young man is 'What shall I do with my life?' " At one time or another, too, this is the largest question before every young woman. Something in the end that she must decide for herself. Something no one else can decide for her. She will be helped not so much perhaps in the determination of her

course, as in the acquisition of an excellent running gear for travel along whatever road she chooses, by any work that regards what people do in the world in a far-sighted, a sincere and inspiring manner. From this point of view "The Training of a Forester" may be said to be *virginibus puerisque* and to be a tonic book for all youth.

I

It is, it would appear, the idea of the author that the young man who is asking himself what he shall do with his life, will wish to do something first-rate with it—something valuable for the present and for a long time to come. No person who finds a fascination in the pages of "Robinson Crusoe" will fail to find a fascination in the program recommended—a program of devoting all one's energies to a struggle with, to a study of the basic, first-hand resources, the great actual realities behind all our lives here today.

No doubt there are many people whose youth has, as Stevenson says, been depressed by surroundings of exceptional refinement, who find no interest whatever in any account of first-hand encounters with the earth, and are temperamentally

incapable, like those born color-blind, of perceiving their charm.

Yet, for many, many persons the true romance of this country still lies in her land. It is easy to believe the authoritative statement that "to the men whom it really suits, forestry offers a career more attractive than any other career whatsoever" and that "the men who have taken it up, practiced, and left it for other work are few." Easy also to believe, though somewhat discouraging to find, that those who have begun the study of forestry and then have learned that it was not for them, have "doubtless been more in number than those who have followed it through."

Everybody familiar with the remarkable chapter, "The Natural Resources of the Nation," of Theodore Roosevelt's autobiography, and with the history of the struggle carried on in the interests of efficient national forestry and of conservation in the last ten years, will appreciate the qualities of perseverance and firmness requisite for a sustained adherence to the best principles of these two great forms of national service.

"The whole story of the establishment and

growth of the United States forest service," says Gifford Pinchot, "is a story of the doing of things which the men who did them were warned in advance would be impossible."

Perhaps, too, one reason why a comparatively small number of men capable of carrying on this effort well has been developed has been because the service is comparatively new, and its extraordinary importance has not been long or fully realized.

A little more than a decade ago the federal forest organization consisted of less than twelve men. The United States forest service today including its administrative staff, the forest supervisors, rangers and guards, has more than 3,000 members.

As recently as 1905 our Government forest reserves were all in charge of a division of the Land Office, in the hands of clerks of whom no knowledge whatever of forestry was required. The Bureau of Forestry of that day was mainly devoted to the necessary national foundation of scientific study of the subject, and the promotion of its interest on the country's behalf, through private lands.

Today to these 3,000 men of the forest service

belongs the task of protecting, and of making available and useful for the people of the United States, under conditions which will keep it continuously serviceable for them, 187,000,000 acres of national forests.

In telling what a man who intends to devote his life to the forest service needs to know, as well as in narrating the chances of employment outside the national service, in state service, in work for private forests and for coöperative associations, and as a teacher of forestry, "The Training of a Forester" relates many facts about the enterprises and affairs of the country which, even when one has known them before, seem perennially novel and suggestive.

II

"The Training of a Forester" is without literary pretensions. It is in the form, practically, of a manual. It may almost be called unliterary reading; and is written at times in the informative but stiff-jointed manner of railroad and of county histories.

The machinery of the book might certainly run more smoothly. But in the present reader's judgment it may justly be claimed that the least

literary work printed, if it be genuinely contributive, makes a better book than the best written text between covers, if this has nothing to say.

The lauded almanac is not the only published unliterary reading which justifies itself in this manner. The reader remembers, as among her pleasantest excursions through printed pages, the prolonged perusal in youth of "The American Girls' Handy Book," also of cookbooks, of a violently altruistic work concerning railway travel called "Railroad Accidents" practically proving that we have no such occurrences, and of a delightful Wisconsin state history.

Strongly, however, as the habit of unliterary reading is to be recommended both for the paths of more idle individual amusement it offers to the kind of reader who likes to follow them, and also for more solid inducements, it is not mainly because the book is unliterary that "The Training of a Forester" offers refreshment. In the first place it gives, both by speech and implication, a large, novel and inspiring impression of our country. In the second place it offers to youth an ideal at once poetic and eminently practical.

III

Where are these large places for life? Where are these great forest reserves whose stateliness and fragrance breathe in silence from these pages?

In too many parts of the country to mention. High on the New Mexican plateau, the Pajarito Reserve soars and drops its grassy swales in air so lucid that riding through it you can see snow on mountain tops a hundred miles away.

If you camp in the dark-forested canyon of the Santa Clara Indian Reserve beside it, eight thousand feet above the level of the sea, you are in a new land magically isolated from the rest of the America you know. Far down the valley, invisible beyond you, are Mexican villages with their dignified little old Spanish Catholic churches and great bells.

Along the roadway that crosses the clear-buoyed brook through the forest, the only passing traffic will be an occasional Mexican in his broad-brimmed hat, with his packed burros before him, or a wagon driven by the Pueblo Indians whose tribes have inhabited the neighborhood for hundreds of years—the men with their

hair braided over their shoulders and the women in their high, whited elk-skin boots, and short, bright magenta or vivid blue skirts. You are in the cliff-dwelling country, and up on the rock face in the Santa Clara, and in tiers and crumbled terraces of the Puyé Cliff of the Pajarito, are the little stone-piled walls and cave mouths of a vanished race, the doors all open in the dwellings they have gone out of forevermore.

The place has an air at once of having risen that morning, fresh-washed and luminous, out of the sea, and yet of being ancient of days. The clearness, the greenness and height and remoteness give it a quality unique and indescribable. There could be, except for the kind of people who would never like them, no region on earth more wonderful than these distinguished, high reserves of the Española Plateau.

It chanced that it was immediately after coming from these open places that I read "The Training of a Forester," with its tale of our million-acred possessions, and also happened on another piece of unliterary reading that seemed to intensify almost with a painful shock the unrealized national value of those great-spaced regions.

It was the Chicago Health Bulletin for July, 1915, and emphasized a fact that perhaps struck every healthy adult who read it with a sense of shame, almost of guilt; the fact that of the ninety children under one year of age who had died in this city in June, nearly sixty had died in the most crowded wards.

No statement could have made one appreciate more seriously how vital the need is for interesting the people in this country in its great, actual, natural resources, a knowledge and understanding of its open places, an opportunity to inherit them, instead of to huddle into congested city streets.

IV

It is not only, however, perhaps not even chiefly, for babies that city years, congested existences, closely localized and airless ways of living are unhealthy and miserable.

In more senses than one the most important natural resource of the country is its young timber. The most important suggestion any *practical* American book can create will be towards helping this to grow up strong and beautiful.

THE TRAINING OF A FORESTER

The fundamental idea of the writer of "The Training of a Forester," is that the young man who is asking himself what he shall do with his life shall do something first-rate with it.

Unfortunately the fundamental intent of some of our most widely featured reading for American youth seems to be to present an ill-drawn, falsely colored and perverted vision of young men and girls, as rather interesting and impressive in doing with their lives something tenth-rate and degrading.

To specify these inane books is only to attract attention to them. The best counsel one is able to take concerning them is to offer in their place the image of some existence excellent and satisfying for a youthful ideal, something adventurous, something large, arduous and capable of developing the self-reliance and responsibility that deserve the deepest fulfillments of life.

HENRI FABRE

Henri Fabre is dead in the ninety-third year of his great life as the most celebrated naturalist of our day.

Even among the biographies of men of distinction the annals of his fame have a quality arresting and remarkable.

Before he was seven years old, as he has told us in the sympathetic pages of "The Biography of a Solitary Student," while he was "a little monkey of six—wearing his first braces" and when "at night-fall among the bushes he learned to recognize the chirp of the grasshopper. . . . "All nature filled me with curiosity and wonder. . . . A voice charmed me; untranslatable; sweeter than language and vague as a dream."

His father was a cowherd and "sower of rye" in the Midi; his family, so bitterly poor that to be near the animal warmth of the cattle they used sometimes at night to shut themselves in the cowshed "in times of severe cold, to save a little fire-wood."

Failing too cruelly as sowers of rye in the Midi they wandered from one small town to another where they were employed in keeping one small café after another, with differing degrees of unsuccess: and the early education of the future savant was literally picked up from the brush along the roadside.

"An arid, stony tract," his biographer, M. C. V. LeGros, says of the region which has been the ardent preoccupation of the naturalist's lifetime, "planted with vines and olives; colored a rusty red, or touched here and there with almost the hue of blood. And here and there a grove of cypress makes a sombre blot." It was from this povertystricken and glorious land of the Midi that Fabre was to translate to the world the rich tones of the voice he heard "sweeter than language."

The South of France has the dignified gift of familiarity. Her great men are the neighbors of the world. When you have finished reading Henri Fabre's history of his education, you, too, have been a solitary student, taking the fortune of the way at Malaval, and have attended his godfather's school, where the pigs and chickens roved around the schoolroom among the pupils.

"When all is said," Fabre remarks, with the extremely quiet irony which sharpens all the lively exactitudes of his charming narrative, "when all is said and done, our master was an excellent man who could have kept school very well but for his lack of one thing: and that was time. He devoted to us all the little leisure which his numerous functions left him. . . . First of all, he managed the property of an absentee landlord . . . ; he directed the getting in of the hay, the walnuts, the apples and the oats. . . . Our master was a barber. With his light hand, which was so clever at beautifying our copies with curlicue birds, he shaved the notabilities of the place, the mayor, the parish-priest, the notary. Our master was a bell-ringer. A wedding or a christening interrupted the lessons. He had to ring a peal. A gathering storm gave us a holiday; the great bell must be tolled to ward off the lightning and the hail."

At sixteen, out of the ranks of the most ignorant companions of the fields, through sheer determination in his lonely study, Fabre actually entered a competitive examination for a scholarship at the Primary Normal School of Avignon.

He obtained the highest place.

He left the school at nineteen with a Superior Certificate which gave him a post as a Primary teacher at Carpentras. It was a very indigent city college—the college of Carpentras. Its halls were damp. Its benches were broken. Its salaries were often in arrears: and Fabre's salary, even after its late arrival, was a sum amounting to only a little over one hundred and forty dollars a year. Here he married, at twenty, a young girl of Carpentras. Here they lost their first-born child, a beautiful child mourned in a lifelong grief. Here he studied, studied, studied: passed two more competitive examinations outstripping all his competitors; and achieved a better position at the college of Ajaccio in Corsica.

It was upon this wild island, this "storm of mountains . . . and immense waves of granite, covered with brush," that Fabre began to devote himself, in the midst of his general observation of botany, of geology and physical geography, to that special attention and recorded watching of the ways of living insects which has given him his most remarkable distinction as an entomologist.

Heretofore, in so far as this science existed,

the method of its pursuit had been chiefly the description of insects dead, the observation of insects impaled. Surmise from such a method did not content this relentless ascertainer. The peculiar characteristics of the peculiar faculties of insects were to be actually learned only from watching patiently the normal expression of their living histories. This was the method he was to use henceforward.

In Corsica he possessed an admirable opportunity to follow this plan of inquiry. Unfortunately he fell desperately ill here of a fever. He was obliged to return to France, and, on recovering, to accept a position as assistant professor of physics at the little college at Avignon.

In this position we find him at forty-five, overwhelmed with work, an unpopular professor, disliked by his colleagues; worshiped by his students; worshiped by his wife, his four children, his old father—all somehow supported on about two hundred and forty dollars a year. This is the amount of his salary and everything else he can earn by private lessons, by outside lectures, by acting as curator of the botanical collection at the ancient Abbey of Saint-Martial,

by becoming the drawing master at the Lycée—by an endless drudgery of odd jobs.

In the midst of his responsibilities as a teacher, as a husband and son and father, he yet had found an opportunity—or perhaps it might be more accurately said, had forced an opportunity from fate—to write two distinguished entomological monographs: the essay on the Coleoptera, the glittering green and gold beetles of the south of Europe; and the great study of the Cerceris, the giant wasp, "the finest and largest of the Hymenoptera that hunt on Mont Ventoux."

In the academic circles of Avignon, Fabre was sneered at for his interest in entomology: and nicknamed "The Fly." The formal little college society detested his shabby clothes. They detested his perverse, independent pursuits; they sent him a letter of crushing reprimand because he appeared at the university New Year's reception with an old, soft, black felt hat; and requested him to procure the correct appurtenance of black silk; and they detested him, and the clergy opposed him, because in his enthusiasm as a conscientious teacher, and his interest in science he gave free evening lectures twice a week

on scientific subjects to the people of Avignon in the Abbey of Saint-Martial.

These famous free lectures were thronged. Always an inspired instructor, Fabre seemed to be especially stimulated by the enthusiastic response of this large, unacademic, popular audience. None who heard the lectures forgot them. Hundreds of the generation which appreciated them were to recall them with praise years later, in their mature life and in age. The devotion of Fabre's pupils has been lifelong.

In the meantime the naturalist's two extraordinary monographs drew the attention of the growing world of science in France to a remarkable, native talent.

The Institute awarded him the Montyon prize. In Paris, the Assistant Professor of Physics at Avignon was honored as the foremost natural historian of his country. In England, Darwin had lauded him as "the inimitable observer" and quoted him as an authority.

He was summoned to Paris by Victor DuRuy, the Minister of Public Education, to be made a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor. He was presented at court; and he has described very humorously his doleful appearance among the

magnificently dressed attendants, before the Emperor who seemed to have as little to say during their interview as his visitor.

DuRuy gave him a luncheon attended by the most brilliant savants of Paris, who were charmed by the conversation of their colleague from the provinces, but disappointed at his statement that he was returning to the Midi that evening. What—wouldn't he stay to see the museums and collections in Paris? Oh, no. No. He was too homesick. He was anxious to hurry back to Avignon and "the gray olive-trees and the cicadae."

They respected his wish and laughed over it: and delighted in him, it seems. Perhaps they enjoyed him all the better for it. Are you to care for a remarkable nature of strong individual tastes for being like himself, or for being like something you had expected he would be? I think I have hardly read in the biography of a genius of a situation more lit with the warm charm of human comedy than the whole scene of the visit of "The Fly" from the formal literal-minded little college city to the metropolis; and the appearance of the ironic countenance of "the inimitable observer" at the Parisian court,

and his comfortable return to the gray olive-trees.

It appears that Fabre was far less interested either at Paris or Avignon in the impression he made on the world, than in obtaining a *harmas* in it. A *harmas,* in the Provençal language, means an untilled, pebbly expanse abandoned to the vegetation of the thyme.

"This is what I wished for; *hoc erat in votis;* a bit of land oh, not so very large, but fenced in to avoid the drawbacks of a public way; an abandoned, sun-scorched bit of land, favored by thistles and by wasps and bees. Here, without fear of being troubled by passers-by, I could consult the Ammophilia and the Sphex [two species of Digger or Hunting-wasps] and engage in that difficult conversation whose questions and answers have experiment for their language; here, without distant expeditions that take up my time, without tiring rambles that strain my nerves, I could contrive my plans of attack, lay my ambushes and watch their effects at every hour of the day. *Hoc erat in votis.* Yes, this was my wish, my dream, always cherished, always vanishing into the mists of the future."

Far, indeed, it seemed to vanish towards the

naturalist's fiftieth year. For the academic opposition at Avignon rose at this time to its height; the clerical opposition to his scientific teachings rose. His landladies were induced by the clergy to turn him and his family out of their house, without a month's notice.

It was in 1871—the year of the Siege of Paris, in the Franco-Prussian War. Frenchmen were impoverished. Only an instant, generous loan from John Stuart Mill enabled the scientist to house his family at Orange, a suburb of Avignon. He left forever the college where after twenty years of faithful work and high public honor his standing had remained unchanged.

A young publisher, Charles Delagrave, had induced him to publish a series of his lectures, which had been meeting with a considerable success. For nine years now, Fabre devoted himself to the task of producing those charming and lively books of instruction, untranslated in our tongue—"The Sky," "The Earth," "The Plant," "The Log"—books which have been the delight of so many famous French writers, the poet Mistral, M. Maeterlinck, M. Edmond Rostand. "For more than a quarter of a century," says Dr. LeGros, "these catechisms of

science, models of lucidity and of good sense have affected the education of generations of Frenchmen."

The naturalist's eyesight was now beginning to fail him. A terrible blow fell on him in the loss of his gifted son, Jules. His other children were growing up and going away to their various vocations.

In the tenth year of his residence at Orange, his landlord in a fit of inspired dullness cut off the tops of a great aisle of beautiful plane trees standing before Fabre's house. As impetuously as the scientist had left Avignon after an endurance of twenty years, he left Orange, after a sojourn of ten. He had now some money laid by. He would never again live on land he did not own. Near the little market town of Serignan he found a pink-plastered, green-shuttered house in the midst of a great expanse of wild thicket. He acquired this place at once. The *harmas. Hoc erat in votis.*

Another great change came into his life at about this period. Not long after their arrival at Serignan he lost his wife. His youngest daughter Aglae came back and remained with him, helping him in his labors of inquiry.

After he was sixty years of age, Henri Fabre married a young woman of whom Dr. LeGros tells us that she was "industrious, full of freshness and life, already completely devoted to his service, and admirably fitted to satisfy that craving for order, peace, quiet and moral tranquillity which to him were above all things indispensable. . . . Three children, a son and two daughters were born to him."

Here surrounded by his young, little children, his daughter Aglae, his second wife, and the aged ex-café-keeper, "straight as an arrow at ninety-six years of age," Fabre plunged, after he was sixty, into the work which has made him famous around the earth and back again—the multitudinous brilliant studies of living insect history assembled in the ten great volumes of his "Souvenirs Entomologiques."

Part of these recollections have been incorporated separately in "The Biography of a Solitary Student," published in scattered magazine contributions in our tongue. Related excerpts have been gathered in various collected books, translated into English under the titles of "The Life of the Spider," "The Life of the Fly," "The Bramble-Bees," "The Mason-Bees," "The

Life and Love of the Insect," "Social Life in the Insect World."

Splendid has the *harmas* been in its final attainment. "It is as though the neighboring mountain had one day departed leaving here its thistles, its dogberry trees, its broom, its rushes, its juniper-bushes, its laburnums and its spurges. . . . It is in the Spring above all that one should see this torrent of verdure, when the whole enclosure awakens in festal attire, decked with all the flowers of May, and the warm air, full of the hum of insects, is perfumed with a thousand intoxicating scents. It is in the Spring that one should see the *harmas,* the open-air laboratory, the laboratory of living entomology, a name and a spot which Fabre has made famous throughout the world."

In a modest and touching preface to the sincere biography by his friend, C. V. LeGros, "Fabre, the Poet of Science," to which this account is so largely indebted, Fabre says, "Thoroughly grasping the fact that one cannot write a biography without entering into the sphere of those ideas which alone make a life interesting, he has revived around me that world which I have so long contemplated; and summarized in

a striking epitome, and as a strict interpreter my methods (which are, as will be seen, within the reach of all), my ideas, and the whole body of my works and discoveries."

What have Henri Fabre's ideas, what has his life meant to the world?

Frst of all, I think, to the lay reader who has walked in the wonderful wild garden of his fascinating observations, the tonic value Darwin noted in him, his energy in exact ascertainments.

This is the magnet that holds one as one regards through the clear lens of the great naturalist's vivid contemplation the wonders of the living world of creatures of the earth and air and water, the Cerceris, the giant wasp, the dark blue and black Halicti, the wild bees of Serignan, the cricket, "the brown violinist of the fields," the bell-ringer frogs, and the labyrinth spiders in their retreats spun of a myriad silver ropes.

As you close a volume—any volume from the "Souvenirs Entomologiques"—you understand why Fabre's words induced Rostand, *fils,* to make natural history his life profession. You see that history, all history, to be valid must be observed from living fact. Pain, terror, hor-

ror may be inherent in these facts. But who will be satisfied with less than the firmest, the actual, the living truth? Surmising generalization is a poor, a pallid, a tame matter beside these records.

"Leaping in the long grasses, the Decticus with his ivory face, crunches the heads of grasshoppers in his mandibles.

"In the shade of the rushes, the praying mantis, rustling the floating robe of her long, tender green wings, gazes alertly on the watch, her arms folded on her breast, her appearance that of one praying, and paralyzes the great, gray locust, nailed to its place with fear.

"The cicada is forced to labor for long, gloomy years in the darkness before it can emerge from the soil. At the moment when it issues from the earth the larva, soiled with the mire, resembles a sewer-man. Its eyes are whitish, nebulous, squinting, blind. Then it clings to some twig, it splits down the back, rejects its discolored skin, drier than horny parchment, and becomes the cigala, which is at first of a pale-green hue. Then

> Half-drunken with her joy, she feasts,
> In a hail of fire

and all day long drinks of the sugared sap of tender bark, and is silent only at night, sated with light and heat. The song which forms part of the majestic symphony of the harvest-tide announces merely its delight in existence. Having passed years under ground, the cigala has only a month to reign, to be happy, in a world of light, under the caressing sun. Judge whether the wild little cymbals can ever be loud enough to celebrate such felicity so well-earned and so ephemeral."

Can you listen to the cicada after that, quite as you listened before?

Not quite. The mystery, the terror, the beauty of existence will have sounded to you in the clear facts of her simple history.

A passion for the keen ascertainments of the exactitudes of reality forms the poetry of Henri Fabre's work and of his life.

"What can you do?" such a thrilling and tonic life seems to say. "What are you worth, when it comes down to realities? To attain success with shallow passing customs and sophistications, to dazzle a metropolis—these are not actual, individual achievements. What have you yourself grasped, single-handed from your

peculiar position in creation? Have you learned how to please and content a father who has failed in keeping small cafés? Have you obtained a *harmas?* Have you truly heard and known the cricket on the road by your own house wall? Then perhaps you have really done something vital and been able to add a little to the race's store of truth."

We all exist in a wild, living garden of creation, imperfectly understood, and may be grateful to an author who rouses instinctively in his readers a sense of the remarkable history that each of us, after all, is living in it—the life of a solitary student.

TWO WOODSMEN

EAST and West we have had a unique piece of good fortune. The poetry of our most distinguished and beautiful possession, our country's great forests, has been expressed for us by two men of genius, in the sincere tones of Henry David Thoreau and John Muir.

Perhaps the most essential quality of poetry, be it rhymed or rhymeless, is that it be truly lived in the spirit of the singer; that it be indeed the living word. East is East and West is West. Various are the voices of these two woodsmen. But in one way very markedly they reveal a kindred manner. Each speaks with epic swiftness of his way of life.

I

"I went to the woods," says Thoreau, "because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. . . . I

wanted . . . to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the whole world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion. . . .

"Still we live meanly, like ants; though the fable tells us that we were long ago changed to men. . . . Our life is frittered away by detail. . . . I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and not as a hundred or a thousand."

In the pursuit of happiness by this design, Thoreau started seventy years ago on an adventure, originally fascinating as the story of *Crusoe* and of increasing interest from an accident of history. For people feel a greater practical need of simplicity today than in the forties, or to go only a step farther back, greater than they could have felt in the age of Elizabeth. It is with surprise that one learns from Carl Snyder's "World Machine" that Shakspere wrote in praise of Arden from a London of about the same population as that of Omaha. This may give us a bird's-eye and impressionistic glimpse of the rapid multiplicity of complica-

tions. Even a foreground as near as that of Emerson's biographical sketches of the Concord contemporaries of Thoreau seems to show us the charm of ways beautifully wide-spaced for contemplation and reflection. Surely our own civilization is far more in want of a clearing.

Always an implement of excellent quality for this purpose, the story of "Walden" has now a keener edge than when it was first borrowed by the world. It will cleave through a thicker growth of superfluities and of trivial acquisitions.

"Near the end of March, 1845, I borrowed an axe and went down to the woods by Walden pond, nearest to where I intended to build my house, and began to cut down some tall, arrowy, white pines, still in their youth, for timber."

As specific in manner as Caesar's "Gallic Wars," is Thoreau's biography of his two years in this house. None, I suppose, will deny that they were successful and that he lived well here.

"It is remarkable," he says elsewhere, "that there is little or nothing to be remembered written on the subject of getting a living; how to make getting a living not merely honest and honorable, but altogether inviting and glorious;

for if *getting* a living is not so, then living is not."

Thoreau, then, got his living by planting about two acres of deserted and overgrown clearing. Here he sowed. Here he hoed and weeded. "I maintained myself thus solely by the labor of my hands, and I found, that by working about six weeks in a year, I could meet all the expense of living. The whole of my winters, as well as of my summers, I had free and clear for study."

Reading a little more closely one perceives that even this amount of necessary toil is overstated: and that he labored only in the mornings of six weeks. It would be difficult to find a more graphic record of an experience of pleasure than Thoreau's chronicle of his work in his bean field. In sheer unpretentious rhythm of physical impression it is like a series of distinguished Japanese color prints—such as this image of a bird above him. "The hawk is aërial brother of the wave which he sails over and surveys, those his perfect air-inflated wings answering to the elemental unfledged pinions of the sea."

Is it so easy, one asks then, to maintain oneself in a manner inviting and glorious? And instantly one perceives that it is not, of course,

so easy. To cut the knot you must not only have a sword, but be Alexander. The reasons why most people could never live with this classic ease, power, and simplicity, is because they are not so classic, so leisurely, so powerful or simple as Thoreau.

Even bodily, most of us are of inferior make. Our senses are hopelessly slower. The stories of the acuteness of Thoreau's perceptions make one feel oneself to be a mere purblind and blundering sleepwalker through the universe. He could detect the odor of a pipe of tobacco three hundred yards away. He could find his way through the woods as rapidly at night by the evidence of his feet as with his eyesight in the daytime. He could pace sixteen rods more accurately than another man could measure them with a rod and chain. Emerson says of his companion that he saw as with a microscope; heard as with an ear-trumpet; that his memory was a photographic register of all he saw and heard; and that every fact lay in glory in his mind.

His presentation is as exact and sharp as the footprint *Crusoe* found upon the beach, and it is always oriented in creation. "When first I

took up my abode in the woods, that is, began to spend my nights as well as days there, which, by accident, was on Independence Day, or the Fourth of July, 1845, my house was not finished for winter, but was merely a defense against the rain, without plastering or chimney, the walls being of rough weather-stained boards, with wide chinks, which made it cool at night. The upright white hewn studs and freshly planed door and window casings gave it a clean and airy look, especially in the morning. . . . To my imagination it retained throughout the day more or less of this auroral character, reminding me of a certain house on a mountain which I had visited a year before. This was an airy and unplastered cabin, fit to entertain a traveling god, and where a goddess might trail her garments. The winds which passed over my dwelling were such as sweep over the ridges of mountains, bearing the broken strains or celestial parts only, of terrestrial music. The morning wind forever blows, the poem of creation is uninterrupted; but few are the ears that hear it. Olympus is but the outside of the earth everywhere."

For Thoreau the poem of creation is indeed

uninterrupted. "A Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers," is calculated to make one understand that one has ears and hears not, eyes, and sees not; and has really never spent a week on earth in an appreciation of its actualities. But Thoreau could not only listen to terrestrial music but re-create it: and not only see but again incarnate on the page the Inward Morning.

Brilliantly mystic and symbolic, his use of words recalls that of William Blake. Such a strength of life as startles and waylays in "Tiger, tiger, burning bright," flashes in his characteristic expression. None else could write "The lightning is an exaggeration of the light," or "The bluebird carries the sky on his back," or that most wonderful saying, "The light of the Sun is but the shadow of love."

Of imagination all compact Thoreau is one of the least explanatory, the most non-literal and humorous of authors. His humor is of the conversational type, the casual, and completely addressed to a peer and quick recipient of truth. The very voices of his visitors are conveyed with the indefinable individuality of the ease of doorstep anecdote—like his description of the Ca-

nadian woodchopper and holer of fifty posts a day who "in physical endurance and contentment was cousin to the pine and the rock. I asked him once if he was not sometimes tired at night, after working all day; and he answered with a sincere and serious look, 'Gorrappit, I never was tired in my life.' "

In an entertaining and brilliant literary essay, Stevenson has described Thoreau—to put it briefly—as a noble and original but cold and priggish genius. He has presented a striking but to many readers unrecognizable portrait of Thoreau's mind, as an intellect brave, but rather rigid and bumpkin-like; and has given no just impression whatever of the extraordinarily flexible strength and casual grace of Thoreau's fancy.

Stevenson himself apologizes for his injustices to Thoreau in a preface read perhaps by ten persons for a thousand of those who know his essay on the subject. He tells us that his monograph has aroused the fury of Dr. Japp, a sincere and learned disciple of Thoreau's, who has brought forward biographical facts in whose light Thoreau's pages "seemingly so cold, are seen to be alive with feeling." With all honor

to Dr. Japp, those readers who, unaided by his facts, have enjoyed Thoreau's pages as being alive with feeling on the author's own showing, will doubtless find that this explanation cannot quite account for Stevenson's view.

The reason of this, I believe, is to be found elsewhere than in the fine contribution of Dr. Japp, however gravely he insisted on its information in the anger of his belief that Stevenson had achieved a popular misrepresentation of a great man. Stevenson was, I think, both fascinated and repelled by Thoreau because of contradictory elements in his own response to existence. Large as a human being, Stevenson can be very little as a partisan. With the most generous candor and admiration, he says that he has scarcely written ten sentences since he was introduced to Thoreau, but his influence might somewhere be detected by a close observer. Yet, having adopted romantic statement and rhetoric as a party cry, Stevenson could not quite refrain from disparaging utterance about an author with so constant a reference to actualities and a manner so little rhetorical as Thoreau's.

Like Sir Walter Scott, Stevenson, as a Tory partisan, will at times return to some of the least

admirable tendencies of the faith of his fathers —in Stevenson's case a faith fostered under Elders and periodic discourse. Never was an author less a rhetor than Thoreau. He does not wish to be awe-inspiring. He never shakes his finger at you; nor leans forward to bowl his rounded periods over you; nor attempts to overwhelm you in any way.

It may be said that because of the clarity of Thoreau's style much that it expresses could probably never be readily perceptible to anyone whose recipiency of truth had become somewhat deafened by being roared at frequently in any resounding conventicle, religious, or political or literary.

Thoreau was no imitator of himself. Life was a series of changing experiments to him. After he had proved its quality at Walden, he returned to Concord where he made another valuable clearing, in the character of his protest against the holding of slaves. His narrative of the events of a part of this protest has the quietly reasonable air of a Frank R. Stockton fable; and seems to relate occurrences in the country of the Reformed Pirate, sitting at his knitting in Sweet Marjoram land.

"I have paid no poll tax for six years. I was put into jail once on this account. . . . The night in prison was novel and interesting enough. The prisoners in their shirt-sleeves were enjoying a chat in the evening air in the doorway when I entered. But the jailer said, 'Come, boys, it is time to lock up'; and so they dispersed, and I heard the sound of their footsteps returning into the hollow apartments. My room-mate was introduced to me by the jailer, as 'a first-rate fellow and a clever man.' When the door was locked he showed me where to hang my hat and how to manage matters there. The rooms were white-washed once a month: and this one, at least, was the whitest, most simply furnished, and probably the neatest apartment in the town. . . .

"When I came out of prison—for someone interfered, and paid that tax,—I did not perceive that great changes had taken place on the common, such as he observed who went in a youth and emerged a tottering and gray-headed man: and yet a change had to my eyes come over the scene—the town and State and country—greater than any that mere time could effect. I saw yet more distinctly the State in which I

lived. I saw to what extent the people among whom I lived could be trusted as good neighbors and friends; that their friendship was for Summer weather only; that they did not greatly propose to do right.

"I was put into jail as I was going to the shoemaker's to get a shoe which was mended. When I was let out the next morning I proceeded to finish my errand, and having put on my mended shoe, joined a huckleberry party, who were impatient to put themselves under my conduct; and in half-an-hour,—for the horse was soon tackled—was in the midst of a huckleberry field on one of our highest hills, two miles off, and then the State was nowhere to be seen."

Thoreau is said to have inspired people with what Henry James calls the "sacred terror." It is readily comprehensible. Quiet as they are, the words, "I saw yet more distinctly the State in which I lived," are sufficiently terrible. Few persons who have read Thoreau's opinions on the general behavior of government, and on the fortunes of the captive and the purpose of the free, will be surprised at the depth of his concern when he says that he put a paper and pencil under his pillow, and found it of some relief

to write his feelings in the dark, in his sleeplessness on the night preceding John Brown's execution.

An English admirer of Thoreau's once remarked to me that Thoreau was not only not known in this country in his lifetime, but is not known, today. So it will appear certainly to those who turn for the first time to "Civil Disobedience," "Life without Principle," and especially "Captain John Brown." Full of fire and power, fused with the grip of a passion for reality, this great essay, in its lucidity and force comparable with the best of Plutarch's "Lives," will not perhaps be widely known in our own day, in the sentimentalities of our sheep-run land. Its independent sense of truth challenges every reader; and flashes a thousand questions at his poor concurrences. It belongs to the great Outlaw letters, like the Phaedrus, and will be read and enjoyed doubtless for its tonic nobility and clear presentation of the souls of Supermen, when its boldness may be accounted a part of the classic style of antiquity.

However, not only in this essay but far more significantly, by his life, Thoreau, and John Muir too, may be said to give a presentation

clear and novel of the ways of Supermen abroad in creation; and valuable news of traveling gods. Like the Superman of Nietzsche's comment in two important attributes, they evince a phenomenal originality and courage: and unlike the Superman of Nietzsche's comment they represent a phenomenal independence.

Of course the most familiar and popular idea of the Superman is very different from any of these presentments—the conception of a Superman is more like an ordinary Hun, victorious and member of a mob. Founded in this country on a characteristic national thought, that as an unquestioning follower on the paths of sophistication, one need not really know anything at all about Nietzsche to be a sophisticated Nietzschean, this conception cannot fairly be described as Germanic. Though the idea of a mere gorging and predatory ruffian as a figure of supreme social value cannot find a foothold anywhere on the mountain peaks of Thoreau's and of John Muir's ways in creation: and it can, though with considerable effort, be hauled and pushed up the cliffs walked by Nietzsche's Superman, yet this popular idea of the ways of Supermen abroad in creation existed in our country before

Nietzsche had encountered the misfortune of even having his name heard by all his American devotees who have never read him.

The most satisfactory element in this popular hero is perhaps that he does not need to be original and cannot be independent. He has to have a prey, and this is all he needs. He enhances enormously the great competitive and imitative illusion that there are no new or creative values, or that if there are, they are of no importance; and that the only practical way to be happy and glorious is either to destroy something someone else has got, or to take it away from him. At bottom this predatory theory of existence is the same as the mendicant theory; and consists of a belief that determined claims upon others are the main human means of livelihood and happiness. Without entering into the question of the validity of this creed, it may be said that the most striking distinction between the philosophy of claimancy and the unformulated faith which breathes so naturally from the pages of Thoreau and John Muir is that these express a belief in a power not claimant, nor imitative, nor predatory nor destructive, a belief in a creative power of obtaining a livelihood and happiness

from an individual grasp of the material and spiritual forces of the universe.

Thoreau, in particular, created an original happiness for himself by a deliberate design upon the universe and the future of men. A great man and a genius, he revealed in all his ways a sheer and astounding strength.

As he lay near death, when unable to hold a pen himself, he dictated a reply to a friend who had inquired for his health, remarking that he supposed he had not long to live. "I may say I am enjoying existence as much as ever, and regret nothing."

O while I live to be the ruler of life—not a slave,
To meet life as a powerful conqueror,
No fumes—no ennui—no more complaints or scornful criticisms.

Splendid are his paths but distant. Even the opening of his wonderful way through the forest of creation is manifestly for the full-grown in mind, for a phenomenal nervous power.

II

John Muir seems in many senses to set forth from nearer home, from the ground of an ex-

perience shared to some extent by thousands of people on earth today. Thoreau sought simplicity and freedom by a spontaneous desire. John Muir sought them from an early knowledge of crushing toil.

He has told us his view of drudgery for the sake of drudgery. Coming from Scotland to this country, as a little boy of about ten, he was obliged to pour forth his youthful strength like water, on his father's pioneer farm land in Wisconsin.

His father roused him and his brothers to feed the cattle and horses, grind the axes and bring in wood before breakfast; and in brighter weather to be out in the snow, chopping and fencing by daybreak. In spite of the fact that "the very best oak and hickory fuel was embarrassingly abundant—the only fire for the whole house was the kitchen stove, with a firebox about eighteen inches long and eight inches wide and deep—beneath which in the morning we found our socks and coarse, soggy boots frozen solid. We were not allowed to start even this despicable little fire in its black box to thaw them. No, we had to squeeze our throbbing, aching chilblained feet into them, causing greater

pain than tooth-ache, and hurry out to chores. Fortunately the miserable chilblain pain began to abate as soon as the temperature of our feet approached the freezing point, enabling us in spite of hard work and hard frost to enjoy the winter beauty—the wonderful radiance of the snow."

Hard as the winter was, in some respects the summer offered greater severities. "It often seemed to me that our fierce, over-industrious way of getting the grain from the ground was too closely connected with grave-digging. The staff of life, naturally beautiful, after this suggested the grave-digger's spade. Men and boys, and in those days even women and girls, were cut down while cutting the wheat. . . . We were all made slaves through the vice of over-industry. The same was in great part true in making hay to keep the cattle and horses through the long winters. We were called in the morning at four o'clock and seldom got to bed before nine, making a broiling, seething day seventeen hours long loaded with heavy work."

Nothing exempted him. When he had mumps, and could swallow no food but milk, he was obliged to work, though staggering with

weakness and sometimes falling down in the sheaves.

With extraordinarily little time, and no instruction, John Muir contrived in the midst of this toil to invent and make a number of original and curious devices, among them a combined hygrometer, thermometer and barometer, and a self-setting sawmill, the models being constructed of wood, and justifiably the wonder of the neighborhood. On the advice of a friend of the family he left home, a year after coming of age, for the purpose of exhibiting these models at the State Fair; of attempting to obtain employment by this recommendation, in a machine shop; and of thus supporting himself while he studied in the preparatory courses and university at Madison. He seems to have accomplished with remarkable ease the purposes he had in mind, but he says he did not complete the regular course of studies.

"I wandered away on a glorious botanical and geological excursion which has lasted nearly fifty years, and is not yet completed, always happy and free, poor and rich . . . urged on and on through endless, inspiring, Godful beauty."

John Muir's characteristic tone is epic. He

sings great sweeps of space and time, speaks continentally, counts time in eons. He is accredited with—more accurately, perhaps, it should be said he is accused of—that tendency to make lists and to mention specific localities which is characteristic of all genuinely epic authors, from Homer, with the catalog of ships and the recurrent rocky Kalydon and sacred Nisa, to Walt Whitman.

The truth is that those of Poe's taste, and who cannot like a long poem, cannot like the epic in any of its manifestations. It was not meant for them, but for those who enjoy being immersed for hours in a subject; love to have the catalog of ships sail on and on; love to hear the chords arising from their deeps all day at Parsifal; and would delight, once John Muir has revealed to them the immensities of the Yosemite, to know the names of all its waterfalls, climbing to the source of every fresh glacial fountain, and harking to the last foam-echo of the remote and all but unattainable Illilouette. Lyrics are for excursionists. Epics are for those who are keen on the trail and enjoy the exhaustive, if not by foot, at least by fancy. For such travelers are the pages of John Muir.

His references are almost incredibly spacious. He tells us that after walking from Indiana to New Mexico with a plant press on his back he took a Panama steamer in a certain Spring; and, on arriving at San Francisco, inquired for the nearest way out of town.

"'But where do you want to go?' asked the man to whom I had applied for this important information. 'To any place that is wild,' I said. This reply startled him. He seemed to fear I might be crazy and therefore the sooner I was out of town the better so he directed me to the Oakland Ferry."

Incommoded only by the fact that he was still weak from a fever he had caught in Florida and by the fact that he had almost no money, he set out at once for the Sierras.

"It was the bloom-time of the year over the lowlands and Coast Ranges: the landscapes of the Santa Clara Valley were fairly drenched with sunshine, all the air was quivering with the songs of the meadow-larks: and the hills were so covered with flowers that they seemed to be painted. Slow indeed was my progress. . . . I wandered enchanted in long wavering curves, knowing by my pocket-map that the Yo-

semite Valley lay to the East and that I should surely find it."

So the walker's prowess sings on and on up to the Pacheco Pass, along the full-fold mountain tops, and flowering valleys; and on and on through his whole lifetime.

This first Sierra summer of his was in 1858; and nearly fifty years later, only yesterday, he described for us another part of his way over what he calls "foundational truth," among the innumerable glacial splendors of Alaska. "I traced the glorious crystal wall, admiring its wonderful architecture . . . clusters of glittering, lance-tipped spires, bold outstanding bastions, and plain mural cliffs adorned along the top with fretted cornice and battlement, while every gorge and crevasse, groove and hollow was filled with light, shimmering and throbbing in pale blue tones of ineffable tenderness and beauty."

Celestial was John Muir's whole journey on earth, till—"when night was drawing near, I ran down the flowery slopes exhilarated, thanking God for the gift of this great day."

When we heard that John Muir was gone, on

the mountain, it was of some comfort to know that he could not be lost to the forest. Both in his deed and his word the protector of American woods, he will live immemorially in their beauty —not only in their actual and physical wonder as they rise on earth in the serried reserves of dreaming silver fir and giant redwood, but in their imagined splendor as they grow forever in the clear air of his truthful pages.

Among multitudes of men and women doing things in discontent, and because of demand or pressure, here were two men who did what they desired. A hundred acts and sayings of John Muir's and of Thoreau's might serve as a protest against the multitude of purblind, reluctant and meaningless doings in which human energy is so poorly wasted. People cannot resist spending themselves in activities they only half like. Undoubtedly the most dangerous and weakening dissipation of life force in the country might be found less in any drug or sport, or even "strong temptation," than in the mere habit of perfunctory performances at every turn.

At least there have been for us, East and West,

prophets of wisdom who could think greatly and whose ideas have been incarnated in lives original, happy and independent.

"Really to see the sun rise or go down every day," says Thoreau, "so to relate ourselves to a Universal fact would preserve us sane forever. Nations! What are nations? Tartars and Huns and Chinamen. Like insects they swarm. The historian strives in vain to make them memorable. It is for want of a man that there are so many men. It is individuals that populate the world."

It may fairly be claimed that Thoreau and John Muir, like *Zarathustra,* and from a different outlook, really could see the sun rise. The whole body of their works is informed by the tremendous re-creative faculty of their vision.

A few hours in the fresh poetry and bright-blown fragrance of these men's wonderful conception of the universe, and one finds oneself fitter both to live and to die. All around, behind and before, the horizon is wider. The vanished flocks of the wild pigeons fly again in burnished splendor over the whole sky. For a lucid interval the heart is truly awake; and can

think, in the enkindling beauty of the light of that sun which is but the shadow of love, about the fortunes of the captive and the purpose of the free.

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